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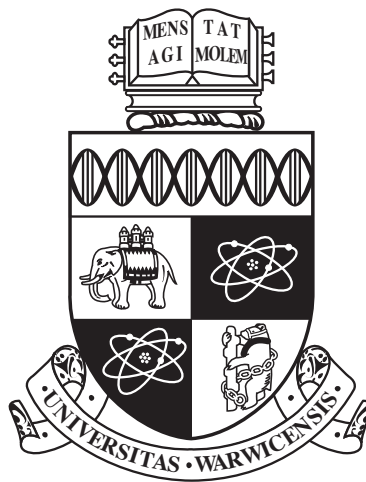
**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD at the University of Warwick**

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**British Artists and Early Italian Art c. 1770-1845:  
The *Pre* Pre-Raphaelites?**

by

**Carly Elizabeth Collier**

**Thesis**

Submitted to the University of Warwick

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# Declarations

This thesis is the original work of Carly Elizabeth Collier. The following is a list of existing and forthcoming publications deriving from the research contained within this thesis:

1. An amalgamated and condensed version of Chapters Six and Seven was published as a collection of essays in 2013: Carly Collier, 'From "Gothic Atrocities" to Objects of Aesthetic Appreciation: The Transition from Marginal to Mainstream of Early Italian Art in British Taste during the Long Eighteenth Century', in Frank O'Gorman and Lia Guerra, eds., *The Centre and the Margins in Eighteenth-Century British and Italian Cultures* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013) pp. 117-139.
2. Chapter Seven forms of the basis of the introductory essay to be published as part of a volume of the Walpole Society Journal which will publish a full transcript of the travel journals of Maria Callcott listed in the bibliography to this thesis. The present author is co-authoring the volume but is responsible for the majority of the introductory essay: Carly Collier and Caroline Palmer, 'Discovering Ancient and Modern Primitives: the Travel Journals of Maria and Augustus Callcott of 1827-28', *Walpole Society Journal*, 78 (2016).

# Abstract

This thesis examines the hitherto largely-overlooked multifarious response by British artists to early Italian art which pre-dated the activity of the Pre-Raphaelites and their greatest champion, John Ruskin. The title of this thesis does not endeavour to claim that the artists under examination consciously formed or naturally constituted a group with clearly defined common interests and aims, as was the case with their aforementioned successors. Rather, the collective 'pre' Pre-Raphaelites is intended to demonstrate that, contrary to the impression given by the standard scholarship on this area, there were British artists prior to the dawn of the Pre-Raphaelites who found worth in periods of art beyond what was conventionally considered both generally tasteful and also useful for an artist to imitate, and who indeed made many of the important steps which facilitated the Pre-Raphaelites' rediscovery of early Italian art in the late 1840s.

The temporal span of the main investigative thrust of this thesis is, approximately, 1770 - 1845. Its structure is intended to reflect the multiplicity of both the catalysts and then the subsequent responses of British artists to the Italian primitives. The first part of the thesis comprises a number of chapters which offer a broad contextual framework - encompassing analyses of taste, artistic education and historiography - within which the varied activities of the artists explored in the subsequent chapters are set. Parts two and three reveal the very different approaches taken by a series of artists in the decades either side of the turn of the century in their attempts to study, learn from and sometimes emulate the visual lessons of the past.

Thus this thesis rescues the often marginalised contributions of a selection of British artists to the resurgence of interest in early Italian art, and demonstrates how fundamental their interpretive filter was for the nature of the quasi-revolution in taste in the last half of the nineteenth century.



# Chapter 1

## Introduction

The time, it is to be hoped, has passed for ever, when in England, *proh pudor!* it was even possible that the great - the paramount authority in such matters - no less than the Keeper of the National Gallery - could be A MAN WHO HAD NEVER BEEN IN ITALY! who, therefore, could never have seen the best works - by some of them no work at all - of such masters as *Cima da Conegliano*, *Vittore Carpaccio*, *Marco Basiati*, *Benozzo Gozzoli*, *Gian Bellini*, *Luca Signorelli*, *Domenico Ghirlandaio*, *Perugino*, *Pinturricchio*, and many others equally eminent ... Was it wonderful, if, under such a prompter, people should talk as if the page of art had been a blank until Raffaele and his distinguished contemporaries and successors arose; as if art had sprung up, at one leap, from infancy to manhood, - from barbarism to the utmost refinement; as if the remains of art were only of two classes, the one hard, dry, meagre, Gothic, tasteless, childish, of which we knew and wanted to know nothing; and the other adorned with every grace and perfection of art!<sup>1</sup>

The above diatribe is extracted from a tract entitled *The National Gallery: its formation and management*, written by the artist William Dyce in 1853 and addressed to the culturally-active Prince Albert. The letter constituted a public effort to obviate what many artists and critics saw as having been the lamentable management of the National Gallery by its Trustees since its inception in 1824.<sup>2</sup> By

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<sup>1</sup>William Dyce, *The National Gallery. Its formation and management*, (London, 1853), pp. 11-12.

<sup>2</sup>The first history of the National Gallery was surprisingly published only very recently. See Jonathan Conlin, *The Nation's Mantelpiece: The History of the National Gallery*, (London: Pallas Athene, 2006). Dyce's complaint about the lack of a representative history of the progress of art at the National Gallery was anticipated by Disraeli almost thirty years before: "Why ... have we deviated from the course which has been pursued in the formation of all other National Galleries? There we shall see arranged in chronological order, specimens of the art in all ages, from the period in which Cimabue rescued it from the Greek painters, unto the present time. The excellent is no doubt to be conceived in the study of the excellent: but we should always remember, that excellence

the 1850s, almost one hundred years on from the foundation of the Royal Academy, the visual arts had risen in both status and importance in Britain, suffusing multiple areas of both public and private life. The contention of Dyce and others was that the collection of the National Gallery - accrued largely as a reflection of the tastes of the Trustees, rather than in accordance with any kind of official policy - reflected neither Britain's achievements as a polite nation of taste and informed connoisseurship nor its aspirations for the quality and social efficacy of the art it strove to produce. As Dyce succinctly (if a little waspishly) expressed it:

I cannot imagine for a moment that, having deliberately considered the question, [the Trustees] passed a resolution to the effect, that the National Gallery ought to consist of a miscellaneous and fortuitous assemblage of pictures, placed together without order or arrangement on any recognisable plan; yet this is the inference to be drawn from the actual state of the collection.<sup>3</sup>

Dyce's complaint against the National Gallery was two-fold. First, that the institution's first keeper, William Segulier, had never himself visited Italy, and therefore had no first-hand authority of the full spectrum of Italian art.<sup>4</sup> Second, and consequently, Dyce believed that this had resulted in the perpetuation of the stereotype derived from - though not authorised by - Giorgio Vasari's dominant, anthropomorphic account of the development of Italian Renaissance art, which was that any paintings pre-dating the era of Raphael had no intrinsic aesthetic value.<sup>5</sup> As Dyce's terminology demonstrates, by the nineteenth century the artists of the Trecento and Quattrocento were frequently referred to derogatorily as 'primitives'.<sup>6</sup> This reference to undeveloped skill - encompassing painters as late as Giovanni Bellini (1430-1516) - served as a descriptive signifier of the varying degrees of absence of perspectival understanding and naturalistic representation of form and colour manifested in the paintings dating from this era (Figs. 1 and 2). Such aesthetic deficiencies, as they were seen, were thrown into sharp relief through comparison with the works of

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is relative, and that to the philosopher, the frescoes of Masaccio, are perhaps more marvellous than the frescoes of the Vatican". Disraeli in *Vivien Grey* (published 1826-1827), quoted in Francis Russell and Dorothy Lygon, 'Tuscan Primitives in London Sales, 1801-1837', *Burlington Magazine* 122 (1980) pp. 112-117.

<sup>3</sup>Dyce, 1853, p. 6.

<sup>4</sup>Segulier had died ten years previously, and therefore could not respond to Dyce's *ad hominem* attack.

<sup>5</sup>Chapter 2 further examines Vasari's treatment of early Italian art and artists, demonstrating that he did indeed recognise degrees of aesthetic worth in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century art.

<sup>6</sup>The term 'primitive' has undergone a number of transformations in its usage in relation to the canon of art history. For the purposes of this thesis, the word will be employed in its nineteenth-century incarnation, when it was used to denote those artists antedating Raphael; although initially referred to derogatorily, their paintings came to be seen to embody a spiritual sincerity, unhampered by illusionistic devices, that was admired by connoisseurs and artists.

artists such as Raphael and Guido Reni dating from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Figs. 3 and 4).<sup>7</sup>

Certainly the majority of art-historical scholarship regarding eighteenth-century British taste has illuminated that which was mainstream during this period in art appreciation, criticism and practice.<sup>8</sup> This was the aesthetic preference for classical and High Renaissance painting and sculpture, and this canon of artworks is manifested in what is probably the most recognised and infamous visual evocation of the grand tour, Johann Zoffany's *The Tribuna of the Uffizi* of 1772-1777 (Fig. 5). Zoffany's painting - commissioned by Queen Charlotte (who would never visit Italy) - was a visual mediation of the central room of arguably Italy's most celebrated gallery, though the artist created a fictitious *capriccio* of sorts, relocating some of the gallery's star attractions into one space.<sup>9</sup> These were Roman copies of ancient Greek sculpture and paintings by the giants of the Italian High Renaissance, with perhaps the most notable examples being the *Medici Venus* statue and Titian's painting the *Venus of Urbino*, the juxtaposition of which created an effective visualisation of the *paragone*. Indeed, letters, sketchbooks and journals written by the British in Italy during the eighteenth century amply demonstrate the preoccupation with those Italian artists whose work was widely considered to represent "the highest development of the art [of painting]."<sup>10</sup> The names of painters such as Raphael,

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<sup>7</sup>In the early decades of the nineteenth century accounts of Italian art still deployed Vasari's negative comments on the Venetian Quattrocento master, which harnessed his achievements to the examples of his High Renaissance pupils: "[Bellini's] manner of designing was but indifferent, and frequently in a bad taste; and before he knew how to manage oil-colours, his painting appeared dry; but afterwards he acquired more softness in his pencil, shewed a much greater propriety of colours, and had somewhat of harmony, though still he retained too much of what appeared dry and hard ... by observing the works of those famous masters [Titan and Giorgione], Bellini improved his own manner very considerably, so that in his latter pictures the colouring is much better, although his design is a little gothic, and his attitudes not well chosen." Alexander Chalmers, *The General Biographical Dictionary*, rev. ed., vol. 4 (London, 1812) p. 397. See Carolyn C. Wilson, 'Giovanni Bellini and the "Modern Manner"', in Peter Humfrey, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Giovanni Bellini* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) pp. 95-121 for an assessment of Vasari's "elimina[tion] of Giovanni Bellini from consideration as a master of the High Renaissance - that is, as canonically determined for us by Vasari himself."

<sup>8</sup>See, as a representative sample, Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny, *Taste and the Antique: The Lure of Classical Sculpture 1500-1900* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982); Jonathan Scott, *The Pleasures of Antiquity: British Collectors of Greece and Rome* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003); Jeremy Wood, 'Raphael Copies and Exemplary Picture Galleries in Mid Eighteenth-Century London', *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 62 (1999) pp. 394-417; and Chapter 9 ('English Interest in Italian Painting, Sculpture and Architecture') in Charles P. Brand, *Italy and the English Romantics* (London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1957) pp. 137-158.

<sup>9</sup>Zoffany was to use the same strategy when commissioned to depict what was, in Britain, the almost-equally famous collection of classical antiquities amassed by the wealthy Catholic aristocrat Charles Townley: Johann Zoffany, *Charles Townley's Library, No. 7 Park Street, Westminster*, 1781-3/98.

<sup>10</sup>'Bolognese School of Painting', *The Penny Cyclopaedia of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge*, vol. 5: Blois-Buffalo (London: Charles Knight and Sons, 1836) p. 93. A plethora of

Michelangelo, Titian, Guido Reni, Domenichino and Claude Lorrain were continually name-checked by tourists visiting the sights of Rome, Florence and Venice.<sup>11</sup>

Concomitantly, an example of the particularly high value placed upon classical antiquity ‘at home’ is provided in Maxine Berg and Helen Clifford’s analysis of the changing imagery used on eighteenth-century commercial trade cards.<sup>12</sup> Trade cards were commissioned by retailers (largely those inhabiting the luxury and semi-luxury market) to essentially fulfil the role of business cards, and there was a distinct shift in theme in the way in which they were illustrated in the eighteenth century. From about 1720 trade cards tended to depict the “profusion of goods” which a consumer could expect to find for sale in a certain shop, but by the latter quarter of the century literal representations of commodities were eschewed for allegorical signifiers of discriminating taste - either an elegant woman in billowing antique drapery or a recognisably classical vase. As the authors concluded, in these latter type of trade cards it was “not the purchasable goods that [were] important, but the transcending association with a particular ideal of the classical.”<sup>13</sup> The pervasiveness of both classical antiquity and the ‘modern’ High Renaissance art which emulated such models in British visual culture in the eighteenth century has been rightly linked by many scholars to the classically-dominated curriculum of the nation’s schools and universities, in which writers such as Homer and Virgil were exalted (and being conversant with their literature was a prerequisite for the ruling class) and parallels were being sought and explicated between ancient republican Rome and early modern Britain.<sup>14</sup>

The dominance of the briefly-summarised aesthetic canon given above was of extreme significance for art patronage and production in Britain as is revealed in the polemic of William Hogarth, who steadfastly contested the pervasive influence of all things Italian.<sup>15</sup> One significant consequence was that any art that antedated the

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survey texts illuminate the reception of Italian art in Britain during the long eighteenth century. See, for example, John Steegman, *The Rule of Taste: from George I to George IV* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1936); John Hale, *England and the Italian Renaissance*, 4th ed., (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005) and Frank Hermann, *The English as Collectors*, 2nd ed. (London: John Murray, 1999).

<sup>11</sup>The subsequent fate of the reputations of these artists is further indicative of shifts in taste; whilst the names of Raphael, Michelangelo and Titian continue to denote artistic mastery, those of Guido Reni and Domenichino are now primarily known only to a specialist audience.

<sup>12</sup>Maxine Berg and Helen Clifford, ‘Commerce and the Commodity: Graphic Display and Selling New Consumer Goods in Eighteenth-Century England’, in Michael North and David Ormrod, eds., *Art Markets in Europe 1400-1800* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998) pp. 187-199.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 197.

<sup>14</sup>See, for example, Philip Ayres, *Classical Culture and the Idea of Rome in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) and David Solkin, *Richard Wilson: the Landscape of Reaction*, exh. cat. (London: Tate Gallery, 1992), particularly Chapter II, ‘Italy and the Lessons of History’.

<sup>15</sup>Hogarth took exception to the preference demonstrated by art collectors for Italian art over British, and the accommodations in that direction made by many British artists - particularly in their making grand tours themselves - in order to secure patronage. He wished British visual culture

era of Raphael was thought to be ‘gothic’.<sup>16</sup> This term derived etymologically from that of ‘Goth’, denoting the race of warriors who sacked ancient Rome, and was first mobilised in the early Renaissance as a clear, negative, aesthetic value judgement about medieval architecture.<sup>17</sup> The closing decades of the eighteenth century in Britain did witness the beginning of term ‘Gothic’ undergoing a transformation in meaning through the efforts of an intellectual coterie who, striving to recover it, imbued the term with more positive and nationalistic associations. However, due to a comparable lack of national production and achievement in the arena of the fine arts, its usage in relation to painting and sculpture continued to function as a signifier of things judged barbaric and ugly.<sup>18</sup> David Bindman recently usefully defined the term as a “familiar word of aesthetic dismissal [in the eighteenth century].”<sup>19</sup> A flavour of the pervasiveness of this negative construction of the term ‘Gothic’ is evident in the following sweeping, historicist summary of the European human condition in the middle ages:

... till the 15th century, Europe exhibited a picture of most melancholy Gothic barbarity. Literature, science, taste, were words scarcely in use during these ages. Persons of the highest rank, and in the most eminent stations, could not read or write. Many of the clergy did not understand the Breviary which they were obliged daily to recite; some of them could scarcely read it. The human mind, neglected, uncultivated, and depressed, sunk into the most profound ignorance.”<sup>20</sup>

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to develop independently of that of Italy or France, writing: “the fact is, that every thing necessary for the student, in sculpture or painting, may at this time be procured in London.” John Nichols, ed., *Anecdotes of William Hogarth: written by himself* (London, 1833) p. 32. See Chapter 5 for more on Hogarth’s art theory.

<sup>16</sup>As demonstrated in the extract from Dyce’s pamphlet and the account of Bellini as given earlier in this chapter; another example is Jonathan Richardson junior’s description of the style of an *Annunciation* mis-attributed to Pietro Cavallini (c.1240-c.1330) as ‘Gothic’: Jonathan Richardson Senior and Jonathan Richardson Junior, *An Account of some of the Statues, Bas-reliefs, Drawings and Pictures in Italy, &c, with Remarks*, (London, 1722) p. 79.

<sup>17</sup>Vasari, for example, wrote that there “arose new architects who after the manner of their barbarous nations erected buildings in that style which we call Gothic.” Vasari, Giorgio, *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, trans. by Mrs. Jonathan Foster, vol. I (London, 1850), p. 24.

<sup>18</sup>The Oxford English Dictionary offers a series of quotations, spanning 1695 to 1841, illustrating the following definition of the term ‘gothic’: “Barbarous, rude, uncouth, unpolished, in bad taste. Of temper: savage.” ‘Gothic, adj. and n.’ *OED Online*. October 2012. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/80225?redirectedFrom=gothic> (accessed October 29, 2012). A chapter by Terry Castle entitled ‘The Gothic Novel’ sets out a concise account of the usage of the term ‘gothic’ in multiple cultural contexts. Terry Castle, *Boss Ladies, Watch Out! Essays on Women, Sex and Writing* (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 73-108. A definitive and magisterial historiographical work is Paul Frankl, *The Gothic: Literary Sources and Interpretations through Eight Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960).

<sup>19</sup>David Bindman, ‘Artists discover Dante’, in David Bindman, Stephen Hebron and Michael O’Neill, eds., *Dante Rediscovered: From Blake to Rodin*, exh. cat. (Grasmere: The Wordsworth Trust, 2007) p. 23.

<sup>20</sup>William Guthrie, *A New Geographical, Historical, and Commercial Grammar: And Present*

How far the author of this excerpt, William Guthrie (?1708-1770), would have engaged with or had access to the material remains of the middle ages, and thus how discerning his comments were, is debatable.<sup>21</sup> His dictionary entry offered a recapitulation of the Renaissance construction of the Gothic which manifested itself as a theoretical means of differentiating and claiming superiority for the stylistic features evolved in the late fifteenth century over those common to the periods which had come before.

The philosopher and art critic Francesco Algarotti (1712-1764) meanwhile clearly and eloquently summarised the dominant ‘cult of Raphael’ and its effect on the understanding and appreciation of earlier artists in a passage that warrants quoting in full:

Raphael is now universally allowed to have attained that degree of perfection, beyond which is scarce lawful for mortals to aspire. Painting, in some measure revived among us by the diligence of Cimabue, towards the decline of the thirteenth century received no small improvement from the genius of Giotto, Masaccio, and other; insomuch that, in less than two hundred years, it began to blaze forth with great lustre in the works of Ghirlandai, Gian Bellino, Mantegna, Pietro Perugino, Leonardo da Vinci, the best grounded of them all, a man of great learning, and the first who contrived to give relief to pictures. But whatever improvement the art might have received from these different parts of Italy, they still, to a man almost, servilely followed the same manner, and all partook more or less of that hardness and dryness, which, in an age still Gothic, painting received from the hands of its restorer Cimabue; till Raphael, at length, issuing from the Perugian school, and studying the works of the Greeks, without ever losing sight of nature, brought the art, in a manner, to the highest pitch of perfection.<sup>22</sup>

Key here is Algarotti locating Raphael’s pre-eminence as a direct result of his having fused the study of antique sculpture with that of nature. The ‘dryness’ so commonly signposted by critics as a hallmark of early Renaissance artwork was attributable to those artists’ exclusive reliance on nature as their model, and failure to incorporate

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*State of the Several Kingdoms of the World*, 17th ed., (London, 1798) p. 52. That the first edition of the above work is dated 1770 demonstrates how popular it was.

<sup>21</sup>Guthrie, a Scot, was a political journalist and historian, and is particularly remembered for his antipathy for the antiquarian and writer Horace Walpole.

<sup>22</sup>Count Francesco Algarotti, *An Essay on Painting* (London, 1764) pp. 157-158. Algarotti’s essay was first published in Italian in 1762 as *Saggio sopra la pittura*. See Francis Haskell, *Patrons and Painters*, rev. ed., (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1980), pp. 347-60 for further information about Algarotti’s activities and his contributions to the visual arts.

idealisation in their works.

Although early Italian art was popularly marginalised in British visual culture throughout the long eighteenth century - a consequence in part of the broader understanding of medieval culture and history, as detailed above, which identified it with Catholic superstition, lack of educational and commercial attainment and feudal oppressiveness - from the mid nineteenth century onwards there was a distinct reversal of attitudes and the Italian primitives played a leading role in British taste. This is not to say, however, that there was categorically no interest shown by artists, collectors or critics in them prior to the birth of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, and the excerpt with which this introduction began also foregrounds this historiographical theme. As the French artist Jean-Dominique Ingres (who evinced a strong interest in the primitives early in his career) stated simply, “You don’t get anything from nothing”.<sup>23</sup> According to Ingres’ maxim, addressed to his fellow painters, every artwork has a precedent (defined, in this context, as an earlier painting, or sculpture, acting as an example to be followed or from which to derive inspiration). This general precept can also be widened in scope to encompass artistic movements; that of the Renaissance was, by definition, classical antiquity. The study, re-use, reinterpretation and transformation of motifs, attitudes and iconography of earlier artworks was institutionalised in the form of a young artist’s training from an early stage, which was initiated by copying casts and Old Master paintings.<sup>24</sup> The complex interplay of ideas that such practices gave rise to has led to a contemporary art-historical vocabulary that accordingly embraces a wide spectrum of terms to signify and define such relations, such as ‘influence’, ‘appropriation’, ‘emulation’ and ‘reception’.<sup>25</sup>

It is notable, therefore, that the modern narrative of the Pre-Raphaelites

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<sup>23</sup>This quotation is the starting point for Richard Shiff’s critical analysis of the term ‘originality’ applied to art history. The question posed by Shiff is as follows: how can any artist, of any discipline, be considered ‘original’ when they and their work are part of a continual historical process in which everything has a precedent? Richard Shiff, ‘Originality’, in Robert Nelson and Richard Shiff, eds., *Critical Terms for Art History* (Chicago, 2003), pp. 145-159. On Ingres’s changing engagement with and attitude towards early Italian art see Kathy McLauchlan, ‘French Artists in Rome: 1815-1863’, unpublished Ph.D thesis (Courtauld Institute: University of London, 2001).

<sup>24</sup>A succinct but useful résumé of the practice of copying is given in Jonny Yarker, ‘The Value of Copies’, The Public Catalogue Foundation (2012).

<sup>25</sup>The reception of early Italian artworks in the period under investigation is a constant concern of this thesis. Part III in particular offers a more extended discussion of the influence on and emulation of the primitives by two British artists in the nineteenth century. Important discussions of these concepts include Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), Cordula Grewe, ‘Re-enchantment as Artistic Practice: Strategies of Emulation in German Romantic Art and Theory’, *New German Critique*, 94 (2005) pp. 36-72, Thomas Crow, *Emulation: David, Drouais, and Girodet in the art of revolutionary France*, rev. ed., (New Haven and Los Angeles: Yale University Press in association with the Getty Research Institute) and Elizabeth Prettejohn, *The Modernity of Ancient Sculpture* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012).

is distinguished by its emphasis on the revolutionary nature of their endeavours, a conceit which can be traced back to William Holman Hunt's self-promotional memoir.<sup>26</sup> In much the same way as Dyce satirised the commonly-held belief that "the page of art had been a blank until Raffaele", the conceptualising of the awakening of the interest in the Italian primitives as a mid-nineteenth-century phenomenon, identifying it with the writings of John Ruskin and the artistic production of the Pre-Raphaelites, has become somewhat of a commonplace in the historiography of the rediscovery of early Italian art.<sup>27</sup> This has, to some extent, been an unavoidable consequence of the prevalent tendency to interpret and understand artworks within the framework of specifically defined periods or movements - memorably termed by Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann "periodization and its discontents" - which has often led to the marginalising of works and artists who do not 'fit' comfortably within a particular field.<sup>28</sup> Thus, when scholars have looked to contextualise the interests and aspirations of the Pre-Raphaelites, they have exhibited a marked tendency to focus on assessing the influence of European groups who exhibited similar concerns: the short-lived Les Primitifs, in existence between 1797 and 1803, and the more substantial self-styled group the Lukasbrüder, later subsumed into the Nazarenes (1809-1840s).<sup>29</sup>

This thesis therefore aims to make a contribution to redressing that balance through looking at a series of British artists who, pre-dating the Pre-Raphaelites,

<sup>26</sup>William Holman Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelites and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, 2 vols., (London, 1905).

<sup>27</sup>See, for example, Lillian Miller, 'Celebrating Botticelli: The Taste for the Italian Renaissance in the United States, 1870-1920' in Irma Jaffe, ed., *The Italian Presence in American Art, 1860-1920* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1992). A review of the recently-published introductory volume *The Cambridge Companion to the Pre-Raphaelites* typified the group as "not simply imitators but tastemakers who recognized the value of Botticelli and Van Eyck long before connoisseurs and collectors did", the inference being that the interest displayed by earlier artists was of limited or no value. Julie Codell, review [of Elizabeth Prettejohn, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Pre-Raphaelites* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012)], *Review 19*, 22 December 2012, [www.nbol-19.org](http://www.nbol-19.org). The essay in the reviewed volume pertaining to early artistic influences on the Pre-Raphaelites, by Jenny Graham, did, however, argue against the view that the young artists were pioneers in their looking to early Italian art.

<sup>28</sup>Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, 'Periodization and its discontents', *Journal of Art Historiography*, 2 (2010). DaCosta Kaufmann's article is a review of art-historical responses to and rejections of a lecture by Ernst Gombrich which critiqued the scholarly practice of periodisation: Ernst Gombrich, *In search of cultural history. Philip Maurice Deneke lecture, 1967* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967).

<sup>29</sup>The seminal English-language text on the Nazarenes is Keith Andrews, *The Nazarenes: a brotherhood of German painters in Rome* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964). Pan-European influences were, of course, the acknowledged focus of an important collection of essays published nearly two decades ago - Susan Casteras and Alicia Faxon, *Pre-Raphaelite Art in its European Context* (London and Toronto: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1995) - and perhaps that there is no equivalent explicit study of the Pre-Raphaelites in their British context is telling. See also Barrie Bullen, 'Mid-Nineteenth-Century British Primitivism and the Continent of Europe', in Francesca Orestano and Francesca Frigerio, eds., *Strange Sisters: Literature and Aesthetics in the Nineteenth Century* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009) pp. 59-75 for a recent restatement of this position.



evinced a demonstrable interest in early Italian art. Thus whilst the letter by William Dyce with which this thesis began addressed a specific situation, it also provides a useful starting point for an introductory discussion of the central issue of this investigation - the understanding and status of the primitives in Britain between circa 1770 and 1848 and, particularly, the responses of artists themselves towards such art.

The thesis is structured in three parts. Part I offers a broad but multi-faceted contextual framework for the investigation of the engagement of British artists with early Italian painters and painting. This section encompasses analyses of the following subjects: the British historiography of Italian art in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; artistic education in Britain and examples of the primitives available and accessible to artists; the comparative situation in Italy; and the issue of taste, filtered specifically through the role played by artists in that debate. The adoption of an historicist approach has enabled the consideration of many of the issues fundamental to an holistic understanding of the artistic forces at play during this period, such as religion, transcontinental influences and knowledge exchange, antiquarianism and patronage. Against this background the varied activities of the artists explored in the remainder of the thesis are set, and parts II and III reveal the very different approaches taken by a selection of British artists in their attempts to study, learn from and sometimes emulate the visual lessons of the past.

The aims, achievements and legacy of two essentially scholarly responses to early Italian art will be assessed in Part II. In 1975, an exhibition mounted at the Bodleian Library set out to trace the origins and development of the illustrated art book.<sup>30</sup> In explaining that their material focus was on reproductive engravings published as books and that the remit of the exhibition therefore did not encompass individual reproductions, the curators stated that “it was felt that books of this sort, most of which have a summary text, were far more telling statements of cultural intent and scholarly enterprise than the distribution of single sheet engravings, which were usually produced as a palliative to more broadly based measures of taste.”<sup>31</sup> Whilst this may be a somewhat overly dismissive reduction of the function of the single-sheet reproductive engraving, the inclusion of text alongside images adds another dimension to such reproductive engravings, offering both insight into but also potentially rendering more opaque the author’s brief.

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<sup>30</sup> *Art and its images: an exhibition of printed books containing engraved illustrations after Italian painting, held in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, April-June 1975.*

<sup>31</sup> Christopher Lloyd and Tanya Leger, *Art and its Images: an Exhibition of printed books containing engraved illustrations after Italian Painting* (Oxford: Bodleian Library Press, 1975) p. 3. This exhibition included a bound-together copy of Thomas Patch’s volumes of engravings after Masaccio, Giotto and Fra Bartolommeo, which will be investigated in Chapter 6.

The productions of the artists Thomas Patch in the 1770s and, sixty years later, Augustus Wall Callcott (in conjunction with his wife) fall into the category of ‘illustrated art book’, though admittedly at different ends of the spectrum. Discussions of Thomas Patch’s contribution to the visual knowledge of the Italian primitives in late-eighteenth-century Britain have predominantly limited themselves to analyses of the quality of his reproductive engravings of works by Giotto, Masaccio and Ghiberti. This, combined with the earliness of his endeavours in this arena, has consequently led to a somewhat Whiggish interpretation of his achievements, as Sam Smiles has very recently foregrounded.<sup>32</sup> However, as this thesis demonstrates, Patch’s work was widely disseminated for almost a century following its publication, which particularly necessitates an assessment of the influence of Patch’s visual representations of early Italian artists on the British understanding of such art. The second chapter in Part II then analyses the genesis, purpose, achievements and reception of the first English monograph of Giotto’s fresco cycle in the Arena Chapel, Padua, now considered one of the greatest monuments of early Italian art. Like Patch’s scholarship, this of the artist Augustus Wall Callcott and his wife Maria (a noted author and translator herself) percolated through British culture on a multiplicity of levels. Surprisingly, however, this volume has been almost entirely overlooked in *fortuna critica*s of Giotto and in the literature exploring the revival of interest in the primitives in general.<sup>33</sup> The significance of this publication resides primarily in its offering the first illustrations after the Arena Chapel frescoes, and the Callcotts’ choice of scenes to illustrate and the accuracy of the drawings reveal much about the status of the primitives in the early nineteenth century.

In the final section of this thesis, Part III, the focus shifts to practical engagement with and research into early Italian art, exploring primarily visual and painterly responses to the style and techniques of the primitives. The first chapter in this section will investigate William Blake’s use of the term ‘fresco’, which he applied both to a series of paintings shown at his abortive one-man exhibition in 1809 and, retrospectively, to a select number of the large coloured prints he produced in the 1790s and 1800s. Fresco was a medium then associated particularly with the early Italian artists, and indeed one of Blake’s more reliable biographers, J.T. Smith, attested to the fact that Blake consciously adopted what he believed

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<sup>32</sup>Sam Smiles, ‘Thomas Patch (1725-1782) and early Italian art’, *The British Art Journal*, 14 (2013), pp. 50-58.

<sup>33</sup>The Callcott monograph was not included, for example, in either volume of the masterly *Giotto Bibliografia* (Roberto Salvini, *Giotto Bibliografia* vol. 1 (Roma: Fratelli Palombi, 1938) and Cristina de Benedictus, *Giotto Bibliografia* vol. 2 (Roma: Fratelli Palombi, 1973); nor is it mentioned by Steegman, 1970, Hale, 2005, or Gombrich, 2002. Haskell, 1976 highlights the Callcotts’ importance for the dissemination of interest in the primitives, describing them as forerunners of the Eastlakes.

to be painting techniques and methods of “the earliest fresco-painters”.<sup>34</sup> It has long been acknowledged that Blake’s paintings bear little resemblance to true fresco painting. However, his engagement with the Italian primitives requires further examination, and this chapter first interrogates the contextual attitudes towards fresco as a medium in the second half of the eighteenth century and then attempts to establish what Blake knew of both fresco and the works of the Italian primitives. Ultimately this chapter strives to offer an interpretation of what Blake meant when he employed the term ‘fresco’, and what he sought to gain from doing so.

The subject of the final case-study is the author of the pamphlet on the National Gallery with which this thesis began, a younger contemporary of Blake’s who most decidedly and publicly engaged with early Italian art - William Dyce. First discussed is Dyce’s early output (c. 1825-1835), which has been largely overlooked by previous scholars of his work; this chapter seeks to redress what might perhaps be described as an excessively narrow focus on the influence of the Nazarenes on his work during this period. Lastly, Dyce’s commission to execute the first fresco to decorate the new Houses of Parliament is explored through the prism of the notes on frescoes he made whilst on a research trip in Italy in the mid-1840s. Ending on this topic provides a thematic link with the chapter on Blake in addition to delivering the narrative of the thesis and its argument up to the point of the emergence of the Pre-Raphaelites. The conclusion then introduces the immediate context of the development of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and evidences the influence of the material discussed in the main body of the thesis on the young artists.

It is necessary to point out that it is certainly the case - made on the basis of the known surviving evidence - that there was no clearly defined ‘group’ of British artists in the eighteenth century who made a collective decision to break from the prevailing visual style and look to alternative pictorial traditions to provide models for their own work, as the Pre-Raphaelites did in 1848. This thesis also in no sense seeks to deny the position of those known factions, the Nazarenes and Les Primitifs, as precedents to the Pre-Raphaelites; it would be erroneous, given the innumerable examples of the transference of knowledge in textual, visual and oral form throughout Europe in the early modern period, to postulate that the fact that none of the Pre-Raphaelites visited Italy in the nascent period of the Brotherhood necessarily signified that their sphere of influence was localised within Britain. However, as the majority of studies of the artistic climate in Britain during the long eighteenth century posit aesthetic appreciation as being largely confined to the antique and High Renaissance, interest demonstrated by British artists during that period in the Ital-

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<sup>34</sup>John Thomas Smith, *Nollekens and his Times*, vol. II, (London, 1828) p. 487.

ian primitives has generally been regarded as anomalous.<sup>35</sup> The present study aims to counter both this paucity of scholarship and its inherent assumption as to the negligible contribution of British artists during the long eighteenth century to the rediscovery of the Italian primitives. Thus this thesis examines a body of work, both literary and visual, created in the period between 1770 and 1848 which, although the product of different artists who have not traditionally been linked in terms of stylistic concerns, evinces a common preoccupation - an interest in early Italian art. Through the series of case-studies outlined above, this thesis will argue that these artists' interest in early Italian art was significant in itself, during a period when public taste ran in a different direction, but also influential for the later full-blown revival of interest in such "gothic atrocities".<sup>36</sup>

As previously suggested, the literature concerning the rediscovery of the primitives in the nineteenth century far outweighs any explorations of the subject in the previous century. Notwithstanding a small corpus of early articles and short essays, survey texts have tended to provide the forum for appraisals (albeit somewhat limited ones) of the consumption of early Italian art before it reached its zenith in the mid to late nineteenth century.<sup>37</sup> Giovanni Previtali's seminal text, *La Fortuna dei Primitivi* of 1966, is distinguished by its discussion of both literary and visual reactions to early Italian art from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, embracing the responses of artists and connoisseurs from a variety of Western European countries. John Hale and Francis Haskell, in 1954 and 1976 respectively, also assessed the rediscovery of the primitives but revealed different concerns. Hale, in *England and the Italian Renaissance: The Growth of Interest in its History and its Art*, contextualised the rediscovery of the primitives in Britain within the wider framework of European taste, detailing, for example, the connection between William Young Ottley (1771-1836), the amateur artist, art historian, collector and publisher of early Italian art, and the French art historian and collector of Medieval art Jean-Baptiste Seroux d'Agincourt (1730-1814). For Hale, this approach was an unavoidable con-

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<sup>35</sup>See notes 8 and 10.

<sup>36</sup>This phrase was used by Elizabeth Eastlake, wife of the artist Charles, in a long, discursive review of Gustav Friedrich Waagen's *Treasures of Art in Great Britain*. The full phrase reads "This was the touchstone of Mr. Ottley's admirable collection; no gothic atrocities found their place in it", and its context is a warning against indulging the antiquarian pursuit of attempting to find or collect "the oldest specimen of anything." Prior to this sentence, Eastlake had written warmly of the merits of the early- to mid-fifteenth-century masters, and her comments are indicative of the slowness of the transition in attitudes towards the earliest Italian masters, those of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Elizabeth Eastlake, 'Art VI. - Treasures of Art in Great Britain', *The Quarterly Review*, 94 (1854) pp. 467-508.

<sup>37</sup>Two significant examples are Camillo von Klenze, 'The Growth of Interest in the Early Italian Masters, from Tischbien to Ruskin', *Modern Philology*, 4 (1906) pp. 207-268, which particularly links the increasing focus on earlier art with the development of art history as a scholarly discipline in Germany, and Tancred Borenius, 'The Rediscovery of the Primitives', *Quarterly Review*, 239 (1923) pp. 258-270.

sequence of his observation that medieval art “did not find a new sympathy [in England],” despite the Gothic Revival in literature and architecture awakening interest in the Middle Ages.<sup>38</sup> Haskell, in contrast, related what he saw as the slowly developing interest in early Italian art to both its economic position in the art market, concluding that “it was of course easier to buy in fields in which the government was not interested, such as very early and very late Italian art”, and the paradigm shift in British attitudes towards Catholicism during the nineteenth century.<sup>39</sup> Ernst Gombrich’s *The Preference for the Primitive* of 2002, notable for its wide-ranging exploration of the shifting historical constructions of the term ‘primitive’, is one of the most complete modern treatments of the subject.<sup>40</sup> In Gombrich’s discussion of early art, however, he focused primarily on the nineteenth century, and favoured an analysis of the critical reception of the primitives over a discussion of artistic response to them.

However, the relationship between eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century artists, collectors, connoisseurs and early Italian art is beginning to emerge as a key topic to be studied within its own right, rather than filling a gap within a survey text. Sporadic investigations over the last few decades on the topic, predominantly focusing on collectors, are being fleshed out with exhibitions, articles, books and conferences exploring the consumption of early Italian art from a wider angle.<sup>41</sup> The 2009 exhibition in Berlin entitled *John Flaxman and the Renaissance* analysed Flaxman’s recently rediscovered *Adoration of the Magi* relief alongside works by Masaccio and Donatello, for example; a very recent conference in London took as its focus of investigation nineteenth-century responses to the Trecento; and the Italian travel journals and sketchbooks of John Flaxman and William Young Ottley were published in their entirety as a volume of the *Walpole Society*, with particular emphasis put on their engagement with early Italian art at the end of the eighteenth century.<sup>42</sup> One of the biggest catalysts for the latter type of work is, undoubtedly,

<sup>38</sup>Hale, 2005, p. 79.

<sup>39</sup>Francis Haskell, *Rediscoveries in Art* (London: Phaidon, 1976).

<sup>40</sup>Ernst Gombrich, *The Preference for the Primitive* (London: Phaidon, 2002).

<sup>41</sup>See for examples of collector-oriented research: Michael Compton, ‘William Roscoe and Early Collectors of Italian Primitives’, *Liverpool Bulletin*, 9 (1960-1), pp. 27-51; Francis Russell, ‘Early Italian Pictures and some English Collectors’, *Burlington Magazine*, 136 (1996), pp. 85-90; Nicola Figgis, ‘The Roman Property of Frederick Augustus Hervey, 4th Earl of Bristol and Bishop of Derry (1730-1803)’, *The Walpole Society Journal*, 55 (1993) pp. 77-104; Oliver Bradbury and Nicholas Penny, ‘The Picture Collecting of Lord Northwick: Part I and II’, *Burlington Magazine*, 144 (2002) pp. 485-496 and 600-617.

<sup>42</sup>Sylvie Tritz and Hans-Ulrich Kessler, eds., *John Flaxman and the Renaissance: A Master of Neo-Classicism*, exh. cat., (Berlin: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 2009); *Discovering the Italian Trecento in the Nineteenth Century*, an interdisciplinary conference held at the National Gallery and Wallace Collection, London on 1st and 2nd March 2013; and Hugh Brigstocke, Eckhardt Marchand and Alison Wright, ‘John Flaxman in Italy: Journals and Sketchbooks’ and ‘William Young Ottley in Italy’, *Walpole Society*, 72 (2010).

the abundance of primary source material in archives still awaiting transcription and examination. Although a comprehensive synthesis of the engagement between collectors, connoisseurs, artists and the Italian primitives is very much desirable, the broadness of the subject has necessitated the adoption of a narrower methodological approach in this thesis.

The focus of this research is original in that it is explicitly on artists, and even more specifically, painters. Collectors, critics, connoisseurs and tourists are discussed only when their activities directly impinged upon or were influenced by the artists discussed, and painters have been chosen over sculptors in part for their mirroring of the central artistic occupations of the main figures in the first Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. In spotlighting the contribution of artists, therefore, this study aims towards both balancing what has thus far tended to be a collector-oriented approach to this topic and, concurrently, making a contribution towards the narrative of the British artistic engagement with early Italian art in which the Pre-Raphaelites to date have taken centre stage - offering a 'pre-history' to the familiar story of the revival of interest in early Italian art amongst the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Moreover, opening up the field of discussion to artists invites the consideration of issues not relevant in assessments of the activities of collectors, such as artistic education and emulation.

Additionally, whilst British painters, sculptors and architects in a small number of cases both wrote about and collected examples of early Italian art prior to the last quarter of the eighteenth century (as is detailed in the first, contextual section of the thesis), in the interests of brevity the starting-point for this investigation has been set to the first known published visual engagement with early Italian art, which is dated 1770. The final case study is of William Dyce and this concluding chapter carries the narrative up to almost exactly the point of the birth of the Pre-Raphaelites; such a broad temporal span (almost eighty years) is intended to enable the mapping of changes in the attitudes towards the primitives, predominantly of artists but also more widely. Third, as has been described, this thesis encompasses a wide-ranging spectrum of artists, from the internationally famous and heavily researched (Blake) to the almost entirely overlooked (Callcott). Some of these artists were key participants in the public and/or institutional fabric of the visual arts during their lives; others were more removed, either in terms of geography or sensibility. Moreover, the choice of artists to investigate includes both those who did and those who did not travel to Italy as a means of furthering their artistic education and connoisseurship, meaning that comparisons between the knowledge and experiences of those two categories of artists can be made.

As this methodological outline reveals, the investigation carried out within this thesis makes no claim to comprehensiveness. The selection of artists is intended to provide a wide-ranging and diachronic picture of the various forms of interest in and engagement with early Italian art displayed by British artists in the decades before and after the turn of the nineteenth century. It also ensures that the permeable nature of the artificial and anachronistic boundaries imposed upon art production of this period of nearly a century is highlighted, as whilst William Blake is resoundingly considered best categorised by the term ‘romantic’, the illustrations of Giotto’s Arena Chapel frescoes produced by the Callcotts are recognisably influenced by the earlier line drawings of the Neo-Classical John Flaxman (who frequents this thesis obliquely).<sup>43</sup> Lastly, this selection of artists has allowed for both the introduction and analysis of entirely new material and the offering of alternative readings of subjects or themes addressed in pre-existing scholarship.

This thesis as a whole therefore aims to offer a diachronic perspective on the attitudes of British artists to early Italian art, and to explore what it was about the Italian primitives that was of interest to them. It introduces, reasserts and argues for the importance of the activities of specific artists to the development of an art-historical consciousness in Britain that looked beyond classical antiquity and the art of the High Renaissance. Finally, although this investigation begins and ends with them and their presence is heralded in the title, this thesis is not about the Pre-Raphaelites. Rather, it seeks to contribute to the current understanding of their cultural context, spotlighting some of the kinds of influences and materials they were likely exposed to during their formative period which have thus far gone unexplored. It is hoped that these case-studies will stimulate further investigations which will, individually and collectively, contribute to the rich vein of scholarship on the British school of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

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<sup>43</sup>Matthew Craske, having taken issue with the lack of attention paid to the historical reasons for changes in artistic styles, impressively interrogated the terminology employed and promoted in accounts of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European art, contending that “broad surveys of the development of the visual arts in the Europe of this period are largely concerned with the process of classification rather than analysis.” Matthew Craske, *Art in Europe: 1700-1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

# Part I: Contexts



## Chapter 2

# The British Historiography of the Italian Primitives.

Art-historical literature has very recently been foregrounded as one of the primary sources for the Pre-Raphaelites' knowledge of early Italian art in the second half of the 1840s.<sup>1</sup> None of the Pre-Raphaelites, famously, had visited Italy themselves prior to the group's formation and indeed Dante Gabriel Rossetti was never fated to do so. That their visual introduction to the Italian primitives originated with a volume of reproductive engravings, rather than original works - Carlo Lasinio's *Pitture a fresco del Campo Santo di Pisa*, first published in 1812 - can be seen as an indication of the paucity of both original early Italian art and copies after the primitives available in England. Thus, textual accounts and descriptions (which took a multiplicity of forms) of early Italian artworks should be given equal weighting with visual evidence when evaluating the opportunities during that period to gain knowledge about such art. Apart from the questions surrounding both the rife misattributions attached to original artworks and of the accuracy of representation raised when discussing the usefulness of visual replications of any artwork, in the case of the early Italians it was textual, rather than visual, accounts of their works that were the most prevalent and accessible. This chapter will sketch the historiography of the Italian primitives in the English language, covering the major literary genres in which accounts of them appeared - by no means homogeneous in length, approach and veracity - and raising some of the critical issues involved in gaining knowledge of one art form through the mediation of another. The chapter begins

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<sup>1</sup>As Elizabeth Prettejohn succinctly expressed, "even [the Pre-Raphaelites'] knowledge of Italian painting before Raphael came as much through the growing literature of art history as it did from the study of visual sources." Elizabeth Prettejohn, 'Introduction', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Pre-Raphaelites*, ed. Elizabeth Prettejohn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) pp. 2-3. It should be noted, however, that the border between textual and visual sources is more liminal than one might at first assume; for a thoughtful and wide-ranging analysis of art-focused literature containing illustrations, see Lloyd and Leger, 1975.

with the figure of Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574), the unassailable point of departure for any discussion of English knowledge of Italian painting.

## Vasari and the genre of artist's lives.

Patricia Rubin relatively recently characterised the central achievement of Giorgio Vasari's *Le vite de più eccellenti architetti, pittori, et scultori* with the following sentence: "Giorgio Vasari invented Renaissance art."<sup>2</sup> Indeed, Vasari's seminal work, first published in 1550 and then in an expanded version in 1568, was the first publication of its kind; a collection of biographies of artists which illustrated the specific narrative of the development of Italian art. Vasari, however, did not provide the first substantive written account of the primitives. The closest precursor to the *Vite*, and indeed an acknowledged source for much of Vasari's material on earlier artists, was the Quattrocento sculptor Lorenzo Ghiberti's (1378-1455) unpublished manuscript *I Commentarii*.<sup>3</sup> Despite Ghiberti's closer temporal proximity to his subjects and, as Julius Schlosser influentially argued, more uncluttered assessments, Vasari's dismissal of Ghiberti's text - "little can be gained from reading it" - may well be the reason that British readers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries evinced no interest in consulting Ghiberti's writings as an art-historical source.<sup>4</sup>

Had Ghiberti's text existed in published form, though, Vasari's *Vite* would have necessarily surpassed it in both scope and topical interest. Indeed, the immediate and continuing popularity and authority of the *Vite* is demonstrated by the publication of the second - revised and expanded (augmented from two volumes to three) - edition in 1568 and a series of critical editions, emulations and translations of this second edition by other authors in separate projects throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This proliferation and dissemination of Vasari's text ensured that its catalogue of paintings, sculptures and architecture, compiled within the individual lives of his chosen painters, formed the canon of Italian Renaissance

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<sup>2</sup>Patricia Lee Rubin, *Giorgio Vasari: art and history*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995) p. 1.

<sup>3</sup>For an English translation of the commentaries prefaced by an informative historical introduction, see Julius Schlosser, *The Commentaries of Lorenzo Ghiberti*, trans. by staff from the Courtauld Institute of Art (London: Courtauld Institute of Art, 1948-1967).

<sup>4</sup>Although Ghiberti's original manuscript was lost, a copy - albeit one suffused with inaccuracies - survives in the Biblioteca Nazionale in Florence. No mention is made of Ghiberti as a writer or theorist in the published writings of Joshua Reynolds, for example, and nor has it been possible to trace references to his manuscript in travel literature. Rumohr is credited as "the first scholar to make use of the long-neglected manuscript" of the *Commentarii*. Gert Schiff, ed., *German Essays on Art History* (New York: Continuum, 1988) p. xxviii. The trajectory of Ghiberti's reputation as an art historian and theorist is thus very comparable to that of Andrea Cennini (c.1370-c.1440); as is referenced in Chapter 8 of this thesis, his treatise on artistic techniques was also neglected until the early nineteenth century.

art. Vasari's account of that art consequently dominated the English knowledge and understanding of the subject. Perhaps the most significant indicator of Vasari's overriding importance in the historiography of the primitives is the subtitle of what is widely considered to be the paradigmatic modern examination of the subject, Giovanni Previtali's *La fortuna dei primitivi: dal Vasari ai neoclassici* (1964). The inference is that any material pre-dating Vasari is of insufficient scholarly worth to merit independent analysis.<sup>5</sup> Certainly in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe, Vasari's account of the Trecento and Quattrocento was generally regarded as the definitive source; his status as an eyewitness to, and thus as an authority on, sixteenth-century art and artists reflected positively on his interpretation of the art of the preceding centuries.<sup>6</sup>

As a preface to his discussion of the British taste for Italian art, John Hale provided a masterly survey of English literature on that subject to which this chapter is indebted.<sup>7</sup> Hale's main premise, however, was that the prevalence of the Vasarian account of Italian art served to arrest, and perhaps retard, interest in early Italian art:

For 250 years [Vasari's] views were uncriticized, and to understand the prejudices that kept the early masters so long neglected, recourse must be made to the outlook of their historian; their reputation was affected so closely by the pattern of his book.

Whilst Vasari's views have indeed been continually challenged, reassessed and re-framed over the preceding four centuries, the status of the *Vite* as a key source document - an "indestructible palimpsest" - has remained constant.<sup>8</sup> A basic familiarity with Vasari's account within the wider discipline of art history - amongst those who do not study Italian art specifically - can therefore be assumed, meaning that only a very compressed account of the narrative of the *Vite* will be given here.

The central thesis of the *Vite* is the rebirth of antique art, following its degradation in the middle ages, and its subsequent development to perfection in Vasari's own day. Vasari's influential historiographic methodology was to anthropomorphically divide this story of development into three parts that were analogous with the

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<sup>5</sup>Indeed, Previtali treated *I commentarii* as mere adjunct to the discussion of Vasari. Another example is the *Online Encyclopedia Britannica*, which misleadingly describes the *Vite* as "the first historical and critical appraisal of Italian art". Sheila Ralphs, 'Italian Literature', *Online Encyclopedia Britannica* <http://www.britannica.com/topic/297281/history>.

<sup>6</sup>Multiple examples of adherence to Vasarian ideas will be given as this chapter progresses.

<sup>7</sup>See Chapter Three of Hale, 2005, pp. 40-59.

<sup>8</sup>This description of the *Vite* is given by Alina Payne in an article examining the influence of architectural literature on Vasari's formulation of the history of Italian Renaissance art. Alina Payne, 'Vasari, architecture, and the origins of historicizing art', *RES. Journal of Aesthetics and Anthropology*, 40 (2001) pp. 51-76.

life-cycle of humans - birth, adolescence and maturity. Doing so, Vasari argued, allowed him to both distinguish an identificatory *maniera* for each era and evaluate artworks from a relativistic perspective (a process to which this chapter will return).<sup>9</sup> In the first (1550) edition of the *Vite*, part one thus comprises the lives of twenty-eight artists active in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, beginning with Cimabue and ending with Lorenzo di Bicci, an authorial decision justified by Vasari on the basis that he saw Bicci as “the last of the masters who adhered to the ancient manner of Giotto.”<sup>10</sup> The second part largely spans the Quattrocento, encompassing fifty-four lives, and the third, with fifty-one lives, culminates in that of Michelangelo, whom Vasari extolled as representing the apex of Italian art.<sup>11</sup> The highlighting of Giotto and Masaccio in addition to Michelangelo in the parts they respectively inhabit further emphasises the implicitly Christian formulation of Vasari’s narrative.<sup>12</sup> As is obvious from this brief summary and Vasari’s own analogy, therefore, the productions of the mature period are rated much more highly than and privileged over those of the preceding eras; the primary value of the art of the Trecento is in, simultaneously, its manifesting the beginning of a return to natural representation in the visual arts, and its role as a comparative marker demonstrating the achievements of a series of later artists, a tension which will be returned to.

Whilst a full translation of Vasari’s *Vite* - in their second-edition incarnation - into English did not appear until the mid-nineteenth century, the consumption of Vasari’s text in the original Italian and its fragmentary dissemination in English throughout the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries means that it constitutes the key point of departure for establishing and assessing English knowledge of and attitude towards the Italian primitives.<sup>13</sup> However, Hale’s contention that it was Vasari’s prejudice against the early Italians which resulted in their marginalisation in British taste during the early modern period implies an unwarranted specificity and narrowness of causality when, as the introduction to this thesis implied, there were a multiplicity of factors at play. Indeed, in its analysis of the literature in English treating the Italian primitives, much of which took Vasari as its source, this

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<sup>9</sup>See the prefaces to parts two and three of the *Vite* for Vasari’s methodological statement.

<sup>10</sup>Vasari, trans. by Foster, vol. I, 1850, p. 299.

<sup>11</sup>The primary difference between the first and second editions lies in the latter including a nucleus of lives of still-living artists.

<sup>12</sup>This chapter cannot sustain a prolonged investigation into the multiplicity of narrative and fictive strategies employed by Vasari in the service of inculcating his reader into his conception of Italian Renaissance art, but a productive recent exploration focused on those artists cast as anti-heroes in the *Lives* can be found in Andrew Ladis, *Victims and Villains in Vasari’s Lives* (North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008).

<sup>13</sup>This was the translation produced by Eliza Foster (using the name Mrs. Jonathan Foster), in five volumes, between 1850 and 1852, as referenced in note 10. Almost nothing is known of Mrs. Foster beyond her disparate work as a translator.

chapter intends to mobilise many of those same examples given by Hale in support of the exact counter-argument to that made by him; that it was precisely Vasari's framing of Italian art in the manner described above, or his decision to include an account of early Italian art as a foil for the achievements of the High Renaissance, to which the vast majority of English knowledge of the early Italians in the eighteenth century can be attributed.

It is quite possible that, without Vasari, the names of some - if not many - of the early Italians featured in his history may have been lost to posterity, as a not insignificant portion of the works attributed to early masters by the author were no longer *in situ* - either having been removed from their original sites to places of obscurity, lost or destroyed - by the eighteenth century. Vasari himself certified that one of his aims in producing the *Vite* was to "as an artist, celebrate the industry, and revive the memory, of those who, having adorned and given life to these professions, do not merit that their names and works should remain the prey of oblivion."<sup>14</sup> This is not to suggest that Vasari's account of the early masters and their *oeuvres*, and its transmutation throughout time, space and language, is by any means unproblematic. However, it seems plausible to contend that without the intervention of Vasari, the state of knowledge of the primitives in the seventeenth and eighteenth century would have been very different. On the one hand, there was limited alternative material on the subject; previous inclusions of artists in chronologies were limited in scope both in themselves and in terms of the subjects chosen and, as has previously been referenced, the only other known compilation of solely artistic biographies - that by Ghiberti - existed only in the form of a manuscript that appears to have been very little known. Additionally, Vasari's work prompted a substantial corrective to this knowledge beyond its own existence - the blatant Florentine bias of his *Vite* galvanised latter generations of scholars, artists and writers to provide histories of Italian art which sought to illuminate and define the contributions of artists from other regions and cities of the peninsula, and a particularly significant aspect of this endeavour was identifying with whom and from where the revival of art could be pinpointed. The major works of this genre, in order of publication, were: Carlo Ridolfi's *Le maraviglie dell'arte ovvero le vite de gl'illustri pittori veneti, e dello stato* of 1648, which profiled 150 artists from Venice and the Veneto and began with Guariento di Arpo (c.1338-1376), author of a now destroyed fresco depicting Paradise in the Ducal palace and an altarpiece of the Madonna of Humility, now in Los Angeles; Raffaele Soprà's *Vite de' pittori, scultori ed architetti genovesi* (1674); Carlo Malvasia's *Felsina Pittrice: Vite de' pittori bolognesi*, 2 vols., (1678); Bernardo De Domenici's *Vite de' pittori, scultori ed architetti napoletani*, 3 vols.,

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<sup>14</sup>Vasari, trans. by Foster, vol. 1, 1850, p. 2.

(1742-3); Padre Guglielmo della Valle's *Lettere Sanesi*, 3 vols., (1782), in which the author attributed the *Rucellai Madonna* (then believed to have been executed by Cimabue), to the Siennese artist Mino da Torrita; and Alessandro da Morrona, *Pisa Illustrata*, (1787-93). Thus this literary *campanilismo* resulted in the highlighting of a series of further names of primitives absent from Vasari for whom their authors claimed significance. That these tomes were also in circulation in England is evidenced by their appearance in eighteenth-century sales catalogues of notable libraries.<sup>15</sup>

Unsurprisingly, though, Vasari was the author-historian most consistently name-checked in the English-language accounts of Italian painting in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, although, in an apology for its own brevity, one of the earliest pieces of such literature to do so - Henry Peacham's *The Compleat Gentleman*, published in 1622 - noted the difficulty of accessing a copy of his work:

If you would read the lives at large of the most excellent Painters, as well Ancient as Moderne, I referre you unto the two volumes of Vasari, well-written in Italian (which I have not seen, as being hard to come by): yet in the Libraries of two my especiall and worthy friends, M. Doctor Mountford ... and M. Inigo Jones ... and Calvin Mander in high Dutch, unto whom I am beholden, for the greater part of what I have here written, of some of their lives.<sup>16</sup>

The artists' lives in *The Compleat Gentleman* are appended to a lengthy chapter entitled "Of Drawing, Limning, and Painting", the total being a reflection of both Peacham's long-standing interest in the visual arts and recent European travels.<sup>17</sup> The importance of art for Peacham was framed by his larger aim, which was to offer a manual by which young English gentlemen could assess and improve their education, thereby ensuring that their conduct and knowledge was commensurable to that of their European counterparts. The inclusion of a discourse on the practice of drawing was justified by recourse to classical precedent, and the lives of painters as an aid to "advancement of this excellent skill".<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup>Charles, Viscount Bruce of Amphilh, for example, owned in the first half of the eighteenth century copies of Ridolfi, Malvasia and Soprani in addition to a second-edition Vasari. *A catalogue of the books of the Right Honourable Charles Viscount Bruce of Amphilh ... and Baron Bruce of Whorleton* (Oxford, 1733) p. 89. Lots at the 1791 sale of the oldest public library in the English-speaking world, Chetham's in Manchester, included Vasari (second edition), Malvasia, Ridolfi, Soprani and de Domenici. *Bibliotheca Chethamensis* (Manchester, 1791) p. 536.

<sup>16</sup>George Stuart Gordon, ed., *Peacham's Compleat Gentleman* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906) p. 154.

<sup>17</sup>Peacham (1578-1644) had previously published a treatise on the art of drawing and water-colours, and is credited with having executed the earliest illustration of a Shakespeare play. For Peacham, see Alan Young, *Henry Peacham* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1979).

<sup>18</sup>Gordon, ed., 1906, p. 137. "Since Aristotle numbred *Graphicé*, generally taken, for whatsoever

It is important to note that Peacham prefaced the lives of artists given to his reader with the phrase that those he had chosen constituted “the best Masters”.<sup>19</sup> Of the lives that follow, only one is of a High Renaissance artist - that of Raphael. The other eighteen comprise artists of the Trecento and Quattrocento, with the proportional emphasis on the former period.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, although Peacham’s lives are organised chronologically and thus illustrate the Vasarian conception of the arts in a state of teleological amelioration, as he did not include a transcription or summary of the second preface (the linking narrative between the first and second collections of lives), all negative value judgements concerning the artworks of the primitives are extirpated. This is a consequence of Peacham’s lives being at, by his own admission, by one step removed from Vasari, mediated by Karel van Mander’s translation and adaptation of the *Vite* into Dutch, the *Schilder-Boeck* of 1604. Van Mander’s version of Vasari eschewed all three prefaces included in the *Vite* as part of what Walter Mellon has argued persuasively was a “strategy of deposition”, aimed at challenging and ultimately downgrading the premium Vasari placed on Tuscan art.<sup>21</sup> The emphasis therefore in Peacham’s work was heavily on the earlier Italian artists, and the lack of an explicit comparative framework, coupled with the condensed nature of Peacham’s lives, means that the stylistic distinctions between Raphael and the artists preceding him are not preserved. Indeed, only one of Raphael’s works was mentioned by Peacham, and then only to illustrate an anecdote regarding Raphael’s surpassing Francesco Francia.<sup>22</sup> Comparatively, Peacham’s reader received much more in the way of an overview of the *oeuvre* of Giotto. Thus should a reader have been using *The Compleat Gentleman* as a guidebook in Italy itself, they would have been more concretely directed towards works of the primitives than those of the esteemed Raphael.

William Aglionby (c.1640-1705), writing just over fifty years after Peacham, shared his predecessor’s desire to improve the English knowledge of painting, with the ultimate aim of fostering encouragement of the arts so as to “Remedy” the fact that England had “never produced an *Historical Painter*, Native of our own *Soyl*.”<sup>23</sup>

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is done with the Pen or Pencill (as writing faire, Drawing, Limning and Painting) amongst those his ... generous practices of youth in a well-governed Commonwealth: I am bound also to give it you in charge for your exercise at leisure, it being a quality most commendable, and so many ways usefull to a Gentleman.” *Ibid.*, p. 124.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 137.

<sup>20</sup>There are twelve lives from the first part of Vasari’s *Vite*, and five from the second.

<sup>21</sup>Walter Mellon, *Shaping the Netherlandish Canon: Karel Van Mander’s Schilder-Boeck* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991) pp. 109-117. Van Mander did offer a brief alternative introduction to the prefaces.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 157. The emphasis in the life of Raphael is on his high-status patronage by all the leading rulers of Europe.

<sup>23</sup>William Aglionby, *Painted Illustrated* (London, 1685). Although Aglionby’s name is frequently

Aglionby's treatise takes the form of three dialogues between a "Traveller" and his "Friend" (prefaced by a dictionary of terminology), in which the material practice of painting, its ancient and modern history and principles of connoisseurship, respectively, are covered. The work concludes with the lives of eleven Italian painters, all of which are taken from Vasari. The selection of lives in Aglionby accords more with contemporary taste, including as it does Raphael, Michelangelo, Titian and the Baroque artists Giulio Romano and Perino del Vaga. However, the primitives are foregrounded throughout Aglionby's text, beginning with the preface. In this, he related a Vasarian anecdote about Michelangelo, "the famousest *Sculptor* of these *Modern Ages*", revering a sculpture of St. Mark executed by Donatello.<sup>24</sup> Next, four pages of the second dialogue detail the contributions of Trecento artists to the revival of the visual arts, and the subsequent six tell the story of the "Second Age".<sup>25</sup> In this account, Aglionby synthesised Vasari's individual lives of selected primitives with the stylistic assessments present in his second and third prefaces, meaning that their achievements are qualified with the shortcomings inherent in their being the early exponents of the visual arts.<sup>26</sup> Thus emphasis was placed on the phrase "for his Time" when Aglionby described the fame of Giotto, a qualifier which he later evoked, with a subtle alteration ("in the Time"), as a marker for demonstrating the achievements of later artists. Concomitant with Vasari, Giotto, Masaccio and Da Vinci receive prominence in this history of the development of Italian painting. Moreover, Aglionby's résumé advanced on that of Peacham through its distilling, from Vasari, the essence of some of the early artists' contribution to the development of art: Simone Martini "began to understand the decorum of composition", for example, and Taddeo Gaddi evinced an improvement in colouring.<sup>27</sup>

The next significant name in this account of the English historiography of Italian primitives is Roger de Piles (1635-1709). His *L'Abrégé de la vie des peintres ... avec un traité du peintre parfait*, first published in Paris in 1699, was translated into English in 1706 as *The Art of Painting and the Lives of the Painters*.<sup>28</sup> De

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invoked in accounts of English painting and art theory, there has been no in-depth examination of his publication. Indeed, Aglionby does not have an entry in either the *Grove Dictionary of Art* or the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Craig Hanson recently offered a thoughtful assessment of the aims, methodology and achievements of Aglionby's *Painting Illustrated* by means of comparison with William Salmon's contemporaneous *Polygraphice* (1672). Craig Hanson, *The English Virtuoso: Art, Medicine and Antiquarianism in the Age of Empiricism* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2008) pp. 93-125.

<sup>24</sup> Aglionby, 1685, unnamed page.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 63-67 and pp. 68-73 respectively.

<sup>26</sup> For example: "Cimabue ... soon outdid his Masters, and began to give some strength to his Drawings, but still without any great Skill, as not understanding how to manage his Lights and Shadows, or indeed, how to Design truly; it being in those days an unusual and unattempted thing to Draw after the Life." *Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* p. 67.

<sup>28</sup> Roger de Piles, *The Art of Painting and the Lives of the Painters*, trans. John Savage (London,



Piles synthesised material from a multiplicity of sources: Vasari, Ridolfi, Malvasia, Bellori and Felibien are name-checked.<sup>29</sup> De Piles rather inexplicably omitted Masaccio's life, but in comparison with Henry Peacham he covered a far wider spectrum of Quattrocento artists with lives of, for example, Fra Angelico, Boticelli [sic] and Pinturicchio. Baynbridge Buckeridge, whose lives of English painters (*Essay towards a school of painting*) first appeared as an appendix to the English translation of de Piles in 1706, highlighted the Frenchman's designation of his lives as 'an abridgement', implicitly criticising Vasari's anecdotal approach; de Piles, according to Buckeridge, "thought fit to let his Short History of [artists] contain only such of their Actions are Serv'd to give the World the best Idea of them as Painters" with the aim of not wearying his reader with inconsequential information.<sup>30</sup> *The Art of Painting and the Lives of the Painters* was reprinted in a second edition in 1744 and became the gentleman's handbook guide to painting. As with Richardson later, de Piles conceptualised the inclusion of his lives, comprising a history of art, as a vehicle for assisting connoisseurs in understanding what defined the art of painting and developing the ability to judge accordingly.

Following de Piles came Jonathan Richardson (1665-1745), the portrait painter and connoisseur. Three influential and innovative texts published by him between 1715 and 1724 discussed and analysed various aspects of the visual arts and aimed to educate both contemporary painters and the burgeoning consumer market about the dual benefits of artworks, which he argued could be both both educational and pleasurable. As the nature of his texts was art-theoretical Richardson did not offer full lives of artists, but he did append an 'Historical and Chronological List' of artists to his *An Essay on the Theory of Painting*.<sup>31</sup> This, Richardson told his reader, was compiled from multiple authors, including the collector of drawings Padre Resta and Roger de Piles. Richardson's point of departure for compiling the list in the first place appears to have been his disagreement with a scale ranking of painters that de Piles appended to his *Cours de peintures*, first published in French in 1708 and translated into English as *The Principles of Painting* in 1743:

[de Piles] has made a Scale, the highest Number of which is 18, and denotes the highest Degree to which any one has arriv'd that we know of ... The thing is Curious, and Useful; but some considerable Parts of Painting being omitted it gives not a just Idea of the Masters.<sup>32</sup>

Richardson's list comprised two columns - the artist's name and the names of their 1706).

<sup>29</sup>'Dedication', de Piles, trans. Savage, 1706.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup>Jonathan Richardson, *An Essay on the Theory of Painting* (London, 1715) pp. 229-239.

<sup>32</sup>Richardson, 1715, p. 230.

follower(s). Significantly, this list diverges from de Piles's catalogue in that it is ordered chronologically, rather than alphabetically, and begins with Cimabue (described as "the Father of Modern Painting") and Giotto (with no information other than his dates and city of habitation); de Piles included no Trecento artists in his work, which he stated represented 'the most noted Painters'.<sup>33</sup> Richardson then, however, jumped directly to Jan Van Eyck (for his status as "Inventor of Painting in *Oil*") and Giovanni Bellini, with no artists in between.<sup>34</sup> This was remedied somewhat in the second "Enlarg'd, and Corrected" edition of *An Essay*, which was published in 1725. In this instance, the historical or chronological list was augmented to include the category 'Excell'd in', and Masaccio was included as a 'master' and Masolino as his 'disciple'.<sup>35</sup> Richardson became a key source of information for later writers on art. The architect Henry Bell (bap. 1647 - 1711) explicitly acknowledged Richardson as his source for the "chronological account" - again primarily a list of names, dates and the occasional descriptor - of painters from Cimabue onwards as an addendum to his account of the history of painting in antiquity.<sup>36</sup> Bell's list was copied from the first edition of Richardson's *Essay*, and thus Cimabue and Giotto are the only Italian primitives included.<sup>37</sup>

As the above account has sought to demonstrate, therefore, readers - whether artists, connoisseurs or gentlemen - had recourse to information regarding the primitives in the primary art-historical tracts produced in the eighteenth century. Indeed there are examples of texts in which the attention given to earlier art outweighed that given to later art, which perhaps can be attributed to an unconscious desire on the part of authors to supply a corrective to the focus on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century art or, more prosaically, to provide their audience with information new to them. Other, and perhaps arguably more digestible, sources of information about the primitives also existed, to which this chapter will now turn.

## Travel guides

Giorgio Vasari's influence extended far beyond the parameters of the literary genre of biography, and specifically artists' lives. Another textual form congenial to the appearance of the figures of the Italian primitives was, naturally, that of the travel

<sup>33</sup>Roger de Piles, *The Principles of Painting* (London, 1743), p. 297.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 127-128.

<sup>35</sup>Jonathan Richardson, *An Essay on the Theory of Painting*, 2nd ed. (London, 1725), p. 270.

<sup>36</sup>For Bell, see Howard Colvin and Lawrence Wodehouse, 'Henry Bell of King's Lynn', *Architectural History*, 4 (1961), pp. 41-62. Henry Bell, *The Perfect Painter; or, a compleat history of the original, progress and improvement of painting* (London, 1730).

<sup>37</sup>Bell, 1730, pp. 127-138.

guide to Italy. The authoritarian role played by the guide in the self-directed ritual of travel during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries has been explored within a variety of frameworks.<sup>38</sup> In relation to Italy and Italian art, with which a tourist desired an acquaintance in order to participate in the rituals of polite sociability, Vasari was cited as the ultimate authority from an early stage.

The Catholic priest Richard Lassels (c.1603-1668) is frequently credited with both introducing the term ‘grand tour’ into English and authoring one of the most influential and comprehensive guidebooks for the early history of that phenomenon - *The Voyage of Italy* (published posthumously in 1670).<sup>39</sup> Lassels’s text was written and refined during the mid 1600s, meaning that his comments on Baroque artists such as Bernini were well-informed.<sup>40</sup> The information about Renaissance art in Lassels’s book was explicitly derived from Vasari.<sup>41</sup> Whilst references to earlier artists are outweighed by those to later, given that the author’s stated preference was not for the visual arts those that are included are perhaps even more notable.<sup>42</sup> Donatello is named as one of three significant modern sculptors; a mention of the tombs of Giotto and Cimabue in the Florentine Duomo leads to a brief digression regarding the restoration of painting and a direction to Vasari for further reading; another example is the mention of Duccio as the original designer of the marble pavement in Siena cathedral.<sup>43</sup> Given both the above references and Vasari’s emphasis on this particular monument, it is perhaps surprising that Lassels goes no further in his account of the interior decoration of the Campo Santo than describing it as “curiously painted.”<sup>44</sup>

A number of decades later, Jonathan Richardson sent his son (of the same forename) to Italy with the express commission of studying Italian art and antiquity. Richardson the younger’s assiduity in completing this task led to the joint authoring of what has been described as “one of the first grand tour guides which offers serious visually acute connoisseurship of Old Master paintings”, the *An Ac-*

<sup>38</sup>For a recent explanation, see Tony Claydon, *Europe and the Making of England, 1660-1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) particularly Chapter 1.

<sup>39</sup>Exhaustive researches into Lassels’s life and writings have been conducted by Edward Chaney; see Edward Chaney, *The Grand Tour and the Great Rebellion: Richard Lassels and ‘The Voyage of Italy’ in the Seventeenth Century* (Geneva and Turin: Slatkine, 1985) and *The Evolution of the Grand Tour* (London: Frank Cass, 1996).

<sup>40</sup>Lassels visited Bernini’s studio whilst in Rome in the 1640s.

<sup>41</sup>Lassels frequently invoked Vasari’s attributions and anecdotes, and expressed his trust in him at instances when the Italian’s authority was called into question. See, for example, Lassels, 1670, vol. 1, pp. 237-238.

<sup>42</sup>“... when all is done, give me Books in a Library, not pictures.” Lassels, 1670, vol. 1, p. 238.

<sup>43</sup>Respectively, pages 8, 193 and 237. Vasari’s attribution in the last of these examples has long been regarded a deliberate fiction. See Paul Barolsky, *Why Mona Lisa Smiles and Other Tales by Vasari* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991) p. 9.

<sup>44</sup>Lassels, 1670, vol. 1, p. 229.

count of some of the Statues, Bas-reliefs, Drawings and Pictures in Italy, &c, with Remarks published the following year.<sup>45</sup> Again, the preponderance of artistic focus was directed towards the fashionable High Renaissance and seventeenth-century masters, but the primitives were not ignored and, indeed, Richardson evinced an appreciation of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century artists. Paintings by Fra Angelico in the Uffizi were praised as “fine ... and very Gentile”, and a mosaic depicting the *Annunciation*, which Richardson believed to be by Pietro Cavallini (but which is now given to an unknown fourteenth-century artist), was salvaged from its “Gothic” style, in Richardson’s opinion, by its “Thought ... so fine, I wonder other Painters have not taken it in treating this Subject.”<sup>46</sup> Richardson was also one of the first authors to steer his reader towards a work by Giotto that was not the Florentine campanile - the Navicella mosaic in San Pietro, Rome.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, Richardson gave the work aesthetic consideration:

The Bark of Giotto in Mosaic is over the Pillars, and in the inside of the Portico, so that ‘tis seen at a great height as you come out of the Church to go into the Piazza: ‘Tis very Beautiful, and much better Coloured than I imagined: The Fisherman is the Best Figure, and is really fine.<sup>48</sup>

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given its high-profile location, the *Navicella* became the standard artwork mentioned in discussions of Giotto.<sup>49</sup> Tobias Smollett (1721-1771), the irascible novelist and doctor, also mentioned it in his *Travels through France and Italy* of 1766, appraising it in an historical as well as aesthetic context:

The great picture of Mosaic work, and that of St Peter’s bark tossed by the tempest, which appear over the gate of the church, though rude in comparison with modern pieces, are nevertheless great curiosities, when considered as the work of Giotto, who flourished in the beginning of the fourteenth century.<sup>50</sup>

As the subsequent chapter of this thesis will demonstrate, a number of purported drawings of the *Navicella* also circulated amongst certain artistic circles in England,

<sup>45</sup>Hugh Brigstocke, ‘Richardson, Jonathan’, *The Oxford Companion to Western Art*, Oxford Art Online, Oxford University Press, accessed Jan 17, 2013, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t118/e2224>.

<sup>46</sup>Richardson Senior and Richardson Junior, 1722, p. 62 and pp. 78-79 respectively.

<sup>47</sup>The mosaic seen by the British from the eighteenth century onwards was a seventeenth-century reconstruction, containing only a couple of fragments of the original work.

<sup>48</sup>Richardson and Richardson, 1722, p. 293. Richardson junior’s singling out of the fisherman for especial praise was not original, however; Vasari wrote of the figure’s naturalism. Vasari, trans. by Bondanella, 1991, p. 24.

<sup>49</sup>The *Navicella* has one of the most complete *fortuna critica*’s of any of Giotto’s works; it was the only modern work mentioned by Leon Alberti in his *De Pittura* of 1435.

<sup>50</sup>Tobias Smollett, *Travels through France and Italy* (London, 1766) p. 414.

further testifying to the interest in the work.<sup>51</sup>

A guide to Italy published anonymously in 1787 is distinguished for both its multiplicity of references to primitives in general and its singling out of unusual names. *The Gentleman's Guide in his Tour through Italy* mentions no fewer than a dozen works attributed to Giotto - including the ubiquitous *Navicella*, a wooden crucifix in the Roman church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva and the Campanile - and works by such very-rarely referenced names as Botticelli and Lorenzo di Credi.<sup>52</sup> The guide was reissued in 1791 in an expanded version, containing a catalogue of artworks and with detailed descriptions of Rome, Florence, Venice and Naples. This new version was published with the name of the author - Thomas Martyn (1735-1825), a Professor of Botany at Cambridge University.<sup>53</sup> Although Martyn's two-year tour of the continent, undertaken as a tutor in 1778, and the journal he subsequently published are mentioned in his biographies, it would appear (unsurprisingly, given the surplus of travel literature from the era) that his comments on art and architecture have been largely overlooked by historians of the eighteenth century. However, the fact that Martyn was a close friend of John Strange, the British Resident in Venice between 1774 and 1786, now noted as an important early collector of medieval and early Renaissance art, makes him interesting in the context of the rediscovery of the primitives.<sup>54</sup> John Strange is known to have owned works attributed to a number of primitives, with a focus on Venetian artists but also including Tuscan; by 1775 he owned, for example, a large altarpiece depicting the

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<sup>51</sup>The account of the mosaic given by Richardson junior and quoted above continued with the following information regarding drawings of it in England: "My Father has the Drawing, but without that Fisherman. My Lord Pembroke has one more Perfect." Richardson and Richardson, 1722, p. 293.

<sup>52</sup>The paintings referenced by Martyn in these instances are an *Annunciation* and one depicting the Virgin, San. Giuliano and San. Niccolo respectively, both of which were in Santa Maria Maddalena de'Pazzi, Florence.

<sup>53</sup>Martyn published extensively on botany, but also evinced an interest in the visual arts early on. In 1766 he published a two-volume connoisseur's guide to paintings and sculptures in British collections, and four years later, an illustrated treatise on the art of engraving, entitled *A Chronological Sequence of Engravers, from the invention of the art to the beginning of the present century*. The character of the latter corresponds with the historical nature of the interest shown by many of those eighteenth-century connoisseurs who paid attention to early Italian art. See G.C. Gorham, *Memoirs of John Martyn and Thomas Martyn* (London, 1830).

<sup>54</sup>John Strange, like many early collectors of primitives, combined scientific pursuits with antiquarian interests. He also patronised Francesco Guardi extensively. More scholarship remains to be carried out on the formation and nature of his collection. For Strange, see John Ingamells, ed., *A dictionary of British and Irish travellers in Italy, 1701-1800* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997) 902 ff and Robert Sharp, 'Strange, John (1732-1799)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26636](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26636) (accessed 29 July 2009). Michael Compton remarked on the frequency of a dual interest in science demonstrated by collectors of early Italian art, but ultimately concluded that the divergence in the status, wealth and backgrounds of those who bought and sold primitives in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries meant that it was not possible to establish a general profile for such connoisseurs. Compton, 1960-1961, p. 45.

*Death of the Virgin* ascribed to Giotto, though now attributed to fifteenth-century Venetian artist Bartolomeo Vivarini (Metropolitan Museum of Art). Presumably the two men corresponded over their mutual scientific interests, but as to whether Strange directed Martyn's attention to Trecento and Quattrocento art is surely a point for further research. Although Martyn's comments on the primitives do not go much further than a simple catalogue of the works he saw, that he paid attention to such a large number relatively early in the history of the revival of interest in early art is certainly noteworthy.

Another travel guide which directed its readers towards early Italian art was first published at what may seem, retrospectively, to have been an unpropitious moment for travel and tourism - the turn of the nineteenth century. Regardless, it still became highly influential. Mariana Starke's (1762-1838) two-volume *Letters from Italy* was first published in 1800; its popularity was such that it reached a second edition just two years later, and its comprehensiveness is reflected by the fact that much of Starke's text formed the basis of the earliest Murray travel guides to Italy.<sup>55</sup> The practical bent of Starke's guides has been acknowledged, as too has the centrality of art to her concerns. Starke's guides contained detailed information regarding issues important for and to tourists, such as food, roads and accommodation (kept up-to-date in successive editions), and she employed an influential rating system for sights and cultural attractions, which included artworks.<sup>56</sup> With regards to the primitives, one of Starke's most valuable contributions is her thorough and sympathetic assessment of the Campo Santo frescoes which, being located in Pisa, she thought had been unfairly neglected:

So little has been said by English Travellers concerning Pisa, that I shall venture to send you a rather minute description of this City, especially as it may with truth be called the cradle of the Arts.<sup>57</sup>

Thus Starke signalled from the outset of this letter her attitude toward early Italian art, and she utilised the example of Pisa as a departure point for a brief account of the resurgence of the visual arts in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Moreover, she perceptively posited the monument as the starting point of an active participatory experience, the tracing of that development of painterly skill and technical knowledge:

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<sup>55</sup>Mariana Starke, *Letters from Italy: between the years 1792 and 1798*, 2 vols., (London, 1800.)

<sup>56</sup>Starke has traditionally been credited with innovating this system, but Zoe Kinsley recently demonstrated that similar such "method[s] of classification" were in use prior to Starke's publication in the home-focused travel accounts of other female tourists: Zoe Kinsley, *Women Writing the Home Tour: 1682-1812* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2008) pp. 40-41. See James Buzard, *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature and the Ways to 'Culture' 1800-1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) for an account of Starke's role in shaping the development of the guidebook.

<sup>57</sup>Starke, vol. 1, 1800, p. 198.

Travellers who see Pisa first, and afterwards proceed to Florence and Rome, have the advantage of tracing the gradual progress of these arts to that state of maturity which the fostering care of the Medician Princes at length enabled them to attain.<sup>58</sup>

Starke also enumerated artworks in the church of Santa Maria del Carmine in Florence, and mentioned the Brancacci Chapel frescoes in reference to Masaccio's status as being "the first person who adopted the present improved style of painting".<sup>59</sup> The Brancacci chapel does not seem to have roused her to the degree of detailed commentary as the earlier Abbé Richard, whose account of his travels was also widely read by the British. Richard assessed the church and its decoration as follows:

The Carmine, the church of the Carmelites, grand and vast, of antique construction ... and very well decorated ... Some scenes of the life of the apostle St. Peter, painted in fresco by Masaccio, ancient painter of the Florentine school, who was one of the first to throw off the yoke of his masters in order to imitate nature, and remove from drawing this cold style, that you notice in all ancient paintings. One can believe that Masaccio would have made great progress, if he hadn't died at twenty-six years old in 1445. This chapel is a monument to the force of a happy genius who knows how to make a route for himself, without precepts and without a model, to the real beauties of nature.<sup>60</sup>

The Brancacci chapel notwithstanding, Starke, like Martyn, covered a remarkably wide range of primitives in her guidebook. Caroline Palmer contended that the sculptor John Flaxman, who made notes and copies after the early Italians during his tour throughout the country in the decade before Starke and shared a considerable personal acquaintance with her, may have played an influential role in directing her attention so markedly towards such art.<sup>61</sup> Starke herself pointed to the aid of

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<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 199.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 291.

<sup>60</sup> "Il Carmine, église de Carmes, grande & vaste, de construction antique ... & très bien décorée ... Quelques traits de la vie de l'apôtre S. Pierre, peints à fresque par le Masaccio, peintre ancien de l'école Florentine, qui l'un des premiers secoua le joug de ses maîtres pour imiter la nature, & ter au dessein cette manière roide que l'on remarque dans toutes les peintures anciennes: il est à croire que le Masaccio adroit fait de grands progrès, s'il ne fut pas mort à vingt-six ans en 1445. Cette chapelle est un monument de la force d'un heureux génie qui fait se frayer lui-même, sans préceptes & sans modèle, une route qui le conduit aux vraies beautés de la nature." Abbé Richard, *Description Historique et Critique de l'Italie*, vol. 3, (Paris, 1766), pp. 48-49 (this author's translation).

<sup>61</sup> Caroline Palmer, *Women Writers on Art and Perceptions of the Female Connoisseur, 1780-1860*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis (Oxford Brookes University, 2009), p. 92.

another artist, William Artaud, in formulating her assessments of artworks.<sup>62</sup>

The reliance on guidebooks by tourists, covering a wide spectrum of social classes, is evidenced by both the proliferation of the genre in the eighteenth century (concomitant with the aggregation in the numbers of those journeying to the continent) and the material evidence of their ownership and use in the form of sales records, inscriptions and annotations. In addition to being repositories of information, guidebooks could also provide the locus for a series of interactions between author and reader, and renegotiations of attributions based on the reader's own empirical evidence. Again, the above explication has endeavoured to illustrate the wealth of direction (and, at times, information) to Italian primitives available to readers through guidebooks, which, in some documented cases, served as an impetus to further investigation.

## Problems with the Historiography of the Primitives.

The content of the preceding sections demonstrates just how accessible accounts of early Italian artists - and, to a lesser extent, their artworks - were in Britain during the eighteenth century. Moreover, the summary above is necessarily selective, as to cover every mention of the primitives would be both impossible and repetitive. The first art dictionary written in English, for example, encompassed the primitives from Cimabue onwards; this was the Rev. Matthew Pilkington's *Gentleman and Connoisseur's Dictionary of Painters* of 1777, which was lauded by reviewers as providing (in tandem with Horace Walpole's *Anecdotes of Painting* and Richard Cumberland's *Annals of Spanish Painters*), "every information that can be required respecting this branch of artists and their admired art".<sup>63</sup> Another publication which evidences the degree to which the names of at least some early Italian artists were present in the collective cultural consciousness of the eighteenth century is William Seward's (1747-1799) five-volume *Anecdotes of some Distinguished Persons* (1795-1797), one of many wide-ranging compilations of anecdotally-based biographies that - probably because of, rather than in spite of, their low status - were very popular

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<sup>62</sup> "In my account of the Pictures best worth noticing at Florence, Rome, Naples, Bologna, Venice, Vienna, and Dresden, I have been materially assisted by the judgement of Mr. Artaud, a young painter, who is travelling at the expense of the Royal Academy, and whose distinguished abilities and close application have already placed him, in the opinion of foreign Connoisseurs, at the head of his elegant and fascinating Art." Starke, vol. 1, 1800, p. 252. Artaud (1763-1823) was a portrait and history painter. See Kim Sloan, 'William Artaud: history painter and "violent democrat"', *Burlington Magazine*, 137 (1995) pp. 76-85.

<sup>63</sup> *The London Magazine*, 51, (1782) pp. 243-244.



amongst the reading public of the late eighteenth century.<sup>64</sup> Seward's account of one significant primitive articulated a problem faced by many confronted with early art:

No Painter ever received greater praise than Giotto: Dante, Petrarch, and Politian, all combined to celebrate his talents in the highest strain of panegyric. He was most assuredly the best Painter they had seen; so that any one who reads what they have said of him, would have supposed him equal to Raphael or Michael Angelo; nor, indeed, could more have been said of those great Painters; the common tropes of panegyric are soon exhausted. Petrarch leaves to a friend his picture of the Virgin Mary painted by Giotto, "cujus pulchritudinem ignorantes non intelligunt, magistri autem artis stupent". Politian says, 'A wond'rous Painter Florence brought to view, Giotto; the World a better never knew; Who, had he lived in fam'd Apelles' days, With that great Painter would have shar'd the praise'; yet Posterity sees nothing in what remains of Giotto that warrants this panegyric.<sup>65</sup>

It is necessary to note that the inclusion of artists in Seward's work is proportionally very small, and Giotto is one of only two primitives featured, the other artists profiled having being drawn from the more fashionable sixteenth to eighteenth centuries.<sup>66</sup> Indeed, although both Giotto and Cimabue (whose biography precedes that of Giotto) are ultimately dismissed by the author, as indicated by the above extract, the very fact of their inclusion, particularly given that they fall outside of the temporal remit of the survey as indicated by its subtitle - "chiefly of the present and the two preceding centuries" - demonstrates their significance. Moreover, it is important to note that authority is lent to Seward's opinion by the fact of his having travelled in Italy as a young man; although there is no surviving record of his journey, and it pre-dated Italian-led efforts to physically reintegrate the primitives into their national art-historical narrative, he presumably would have seen at least a minimal amount of early Italian painting either via self-discovery or

<sup>64</sup>For a concise discussion of the development, popularity and status of the anecdote genre in eighteenth-century English literature see Karen Junod, 'Drawing Pictures in Words: The Anecdote as Spatial Form in Biographies of Hogarth,' in *"The" Space of English*, ed. by David Spurr and Cornelia Tschichold (Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 2003) pp. 119-134.

<sup>65</sup>William Seward, *Anecdotes of Some Distinguished Persons*, 2nd ed., vol. 4 (London, 1796) pp. 161-162.

<sup>66</sup>The largest group represented are monarchs. Immediately following the brief biography of Giotto is one of Leonardo da Vinci; the names of the other artists included form a familiar roster, including as they do Raphael, Michelangelo, Correggio and Poussin.

under the direction of a guide (human or literary).

Despite the lack of attention paid to primitives by Seward, the way in which he problematised the limitations of language in relation to its capacity for or ability to form a record of and differentiate between the abilities of multiple artists is significant. Seward's complaint is further interesting for the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Italian sources he cites, thereby demonstrating that the thirteenth-century Italian painters were also understood as part of a specific historical context. However, hyperbolic literary descriptions of early Italian art and artists was not solely an issue of relative historical specificity. Vasari's ekphrastic descriptions of early Italian paintings were similarly haunted by the superlative descriptors he used for later Italian art which he claimed represented the pinnacle of artistic achievement. The fundamental similarities in tone and content of Vasari's descriptions of early and later Italian Renaissance art was noted by Svetlana Alpers, while Hayden Maginnis later made the important observation that this must have been just as disconcerting for Vasari's contemporary readership, in the sixteenth century, as it was for an eighteenth-century audience.<sup>67</sup> Figures in paintings by artists spanning the Renaissance - by Giotto, Fra Angelico, Masaccio, Filippo Lippi and Raphael - were all praised for the authenticity of their rendering of emotions, as too were details celebrated for their naturalism. Vasari himself acknowledged the tension inherent in such concordances, but argued for setting two temporal frameworks at play within the *Vite*; subsumed within his overall absolute criterion, the *perfetta regola dell'arte*, was a relative standard against which artworks could be judged, described as *la qualità de'tempi*. Given the various ways in which Vasari's biographies and descriptions were excerpted, extracted, condensed and translated, as demonstrated earlier in this chapter, this over-arching conceptual understanding and marshalling of Italian Renaissance art was not always transmitted to later readers. In addition to the critical problems inherent in translating visual material into words, the kind of inter-semiotic translation that occurred when artworks were copied anachronistically by a contemporary technique posed another challenge to viewers. The next chapter of this thesis will identify and discuss reproductions of early Italian art - in addition to both genuine and wrongly-attributed original works - that were in circulation in Britain during the eighteenth century.

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<sup>67</sup>Svetlana Alpers, 'Ekphrasis and Aesthetic Attitudes in Vasari's *Lives*', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 23 (1960) pp. 190-215 and Hayden Maginnis, 'Giotto's World through Vasari's Eyes', *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 56 (1993) pp. 385-408.

## Chapter 3

# Access to Art, Copying and Artistic Education in Eighteenth-Century Britain.

It is surprising how partial every nation, except our own, is to their artists; a Dutchman will prefer the high finish of his Mieris and Gerrard Dow, his Ostade and Berchem, the Fleming will celebrate his Rubens and Vandyke, Teniers and Rembrandt; the Frenchman will boast of his Le Brun, Le Sueur, Bourdon, and dispute the merit of his Poussin, even with Raphael; while the Italian looks on them all with contempt. And even in Italy, every province disputes for the merit of its own school, against those of all the others; whilst the Englishman is pleased with everything that is not the production of England.<sup>1</sup>

The story of the development of English art in the eighteenth century as told from a multiplicity of perspectives - art-historical, socio-historical, political and economic - is one of an unremitting uphill struggle for acceptance within a hostile environment.<sup>2</sup> The above quotation, which dates to 1754 and is taken from James Burgess's polemic preface to *The Lives of the Most Eminent Modern Painters, who have lived since, or were omitted by, Mons. de Piles*, encapsulated the much-

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<sup>1</sup>James Burgess, *The Lives of the Most Eminent Modern Painters, who have lived since, or were omitted by, Mons de Piles* (London, 1754). Burgess's book was addressed to connoisseurs - "every gentleman ... who is pleased with, or intends to collect pictures" - and aimed to teach them how to distinguish between the different schools of painting and to recognise genuine hands. However, Burgess also used this publication as a platform from which to attack 'fashionable' connoisseurs and advocate for modern British painters.

<sup>2</sup>For comprehensive accounts of the development of English painting see: Iain Pears, *The Discovery of Painting* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988); Ellis Waterhouse, *Painting in Britain: 1530 to 1790*, 5th ed., (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994) and John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Harper Collins, 1997), particularly 'Part III: Paint'.

lamented state of patronage and artistic prospects endured by the fledgling English school during the eighteenth century. Lack of artistic opportunity in Britain for much of the era stemmed from an array of social conditions. The deficiency in formal artistic training until the founding of the Royal Academy in 1768, the dearth of royal patronage during the early Hanoverian reign and the religious situation (which had a considerable impact upon both the genres of art produced and its accessibility to public view) were compounded by the increasing popularity of the Grand Tour with both aristocrats (the fundamental source of patronage in Britain) and, increasingly, middle-class patricians. Travel on the continent, and the associated first-hand exposure to artworks of the various Italian schools, greatly widened the educational parameters of such individuals and, in many cases, had the detrimental result for native English artists of inculcating tastes that could only be sated by original Italian art, be it antique, Renaissance or contemporary. To comprehend fully the unusual circumstances that governed artistic production in England throughout the eighteenth century, it is desirable to explicate further the factors listed above which mitigated against British achievement in painting and sculpture. The story begins, paradoxically, with the elevation of the visual arts in the cultural sphere following their relative neglect in the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods.

Under the rule of Charles I (1625-1649), the visual arts flourished to an extent never before experienced in Britain. A significant group of aristocratic connoisseurs, including Thomas Howard, 14th Earl of Arundel, George Villiers, 1st Duke of Buckingham, and the King himself amassed noteworthy private collections.<sup>3</sup> A significant proportion of paintings produced were, of course, portraits, but there did also exist a sizeable market for history paintings, both bought and commissioned. Despite his country's Protestantism, Charles (himself married to a Catholic Queen) was a predominantly tolerant ruler, and religious works - although not generally on public display - formed a substantial part of collections such as that of the Catholic Arundel. However, in terms of both patronage and collecting the dominant preference was for foreign masters; Charles I's court painters included such eminent artists as Daniel Mytens, Orazio Gentileschi and Anthony Van Dyck. Compared to these luminaries, contemporary British artists were considered significantly inferior and there was consequently no drive to educate native artists beyond the traditional route of an individual apprenticeship. Furthermore, as the country slid into civil war, art (and Charles's lavish expenditure on it) became mobilised in the negative

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<sup>3</sup>For an account of the material nature of Charles's court and his activities as a patron and collector of art that remains unsurpassed in detail and archival documentation, see Arthur MacGregor, *The Late King's Goods* (London: A. McAlpine in association with Oxford University Press, 1989). For a general survey of seventeenth-century English collecting with individual chapters on Arundel and Buckingham, see Edward Chaney, *The Evolution of English Collecting* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003).

narratives perpetrated against the monarchy, and the suspicion with which art was subsequently regarded by the masses endured throughout the following century. The dispersal of the collections of the King and his courtiers further damaged Britain's fledgling artistic tradition and, although some works were reclaimed for the country upon the restoration of the monarchy, Charles II was by no means as accomplished a connoisseur as his father as Horace Walpole's damning epithet attested: "The restoration [of Charles II] brought back the arts, not taste."<sup>4</sup>

By the turn of the eighteenth century, then, Britain was only just beginning to recover from extreme dynastic and religious turbulence and was still subject to the enduring influence and suspicion of the Puritans, neither of which were conducive to the flowering of the visual arts. The accession of the Hanoverians certainly did nothing to immediately improve matters. The decidedly unproductive artistic situation in Britain at the turn of the century was reflected in Baynbrigg Buckeridge's *Essay towards a school of painting* of 1706, with particular emphasis placed on the issue of native talent:

[One] cannot but wish we had the same advantage as other schools have in an academy ... had we an academy, we might see how high the English genius would soar ... how much would we outshine [the French and Italians] had the English disciples in this art as many helps and encouragements as theirs?<sup>5</sup>

Buckeridge's plea was to be answered by the founding of a small nucleus of academies during the eighteenth century, such as the elitist London Academy of Painting and Drawing in 1711 (inaugurated and governed by the portrait painter Sir Godfrey Kneller), and its corrective, the more egalitarian St Martin's Lane Academy (in its second incarnation of 1735), culminating in the long-awaited birth of the Royal Academy in 1768.<sup>6</sup> The scope of the education offered by the latter to young artists, set out in a document of aims and intentions presented to George III in 1768, was unprecedented in London. It included lectures given by specialist professors of anatomy, architecture, painting and perspective and geometry, access to a library containing books and prints, the opportunity to execute life studies and an annual exhibition at which students could study works by the Academicians and other contemporary masters, all in addition to various financial awards to facilitate studying

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<sup>4</sup>Quoted in Pears, 1988, p. 134.

<sup>5</sup>This essay, referenced in the previous chapter, has even greater significance as the first attempt by any author to write a history of English painting, using the biographical formula made famous by Vasari.

<sup>6</sup>A recent study of the Academy which considers the wider context of its forebears is Holger Hoock, *The Kings Artists: The Royal Academy of Arts and the Politics of British Culture, 1760-1840* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

at home and abroad. It is both the increased educative opportunities available to both young and established artists and the circulation and thereby availability of artworks in eighteenth-century Britain that are of particular interest for this chapter.

## Access to art in the eighteenth century

For the majority of the eighteenth century, artists in Britain without significant means or social status were particularly limited as to the artworks they were exposed to. A very public chastisement of the possessive practices of connoisseurs was made by Buckeridge in the text previously quoted from. This work was dedicated to a Colonel Robert Child, whose father, Sir Francis Child, had amassed a celebrated collection of paintings whilst on a tour of Northern Europe in 1697. Buckeridge's dedication overall comprises the familiar mixture of overblown flattery and hubris, but significant in the context of this investigation are his comments about the collection Child inherited:

It is true, we [England] have several admirable collections ... I have heard a famous painter assert, that our English nobility and gentry may boast of as many good pictures, of the best Italian masters, as Rome itself, churches only excepted; and yet it is so difficult to have access to any of these collections, unless it be to yours Sir, who seem to have made your excellent collection as much for the public instruction, as for your own private satisfaction, that they are, in a great measure, rendered useless, like gold in a miser's coffer.<sup>7</sup>

Old Master paintings in Britain were indeed very much concentrated within the possession of a small minority of wealthy patricians and were thus largely inaccessible to native professional artists, particularly those at an early stage in their career, who by-and-large were not gentlemen. Things did not improve much over the next half-century, according to Winckelmann's scathing evaluation in 1760: "those barbarians, the English, buy up everything and in their own country nobody sees it but themselves".<sup>8</sup>

Neither, of course, was there much opportunity to study, imitate and emulate art in public contexts, given the effects of the Protestant distrust of idolatry. The religious edifices of the nation, though more accessible, were woefully inadequate in terms of their decoration in comparison with Catholic countries. The majority of artists were reliant, therefore, on both the spaces of commerce for art - notably the

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<sup>7</sup>Baynbridge Buckeridge, *Essay towards a school of painting* (London, 1706), p. ii.

<sup>8</sup>Quoted in Kenneth Hudson, *The Social History of Museums* (London: Macmillan, 1975) p. 4.

auction house - which flourished during the period, and the enlightened beneficence of those connoisseurs who looked beyond the achievements of the past at the future of the fledgling English school. With regard to the first of these two opportunities, an example is given in the earliest account of the life of William Blake, which stressed his utilising of “Langford’s, Christie’s, and other auction-rooms” as opportunities for the study of art.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, recent investigations into the function and status of auctions of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries have emphasised both the preponderance of middle-class buyers at such events and the related ambivalence of the virtuosi, or upper-classes, about them.<sup>10</sup> As regards the latter of the two primary opportunities that artists had to see original artworks, Dr. Richard Mead - whose large collection of antiquities and paintings was made available to artists on a daily basis during the first half of the century - is perhaps the archetypal example.<sup>11</sup>

It is at this juncture that the issue of popular taste once again becomes particularly significant. Given the restrictions outlined above, the consumption of artwork by artists in Britain in the early to mid eighteenth century was thus predominantly dictated by the aesthetic preferences of connoisseurs, which were themselves remarkably narrow. A plethora of excellent studies into eighteenth-century taste (and the brief résumé given in the introduction to this thesis) render it redundant to rehash the ample evidence concerning what the British were buying pre-1768; suffice to say, the works accessible to artists through the forum of the auction house essentially dated from two periods only - antiquity, and (roughly) 1500 to the contemporary period.<sup>12</sup> The medieval era and that of the early Renaissance were almost entirely unrepresented; Gerard Vaughan claimed that Charles Townley was responsible for the importation of the first Trecento Florentine painting into Britain in 1772 (the fresco fragment, then given to Giotto, from the Manetti Chapel in Sta Maria del Carmine), and a search of the Getty Provenance Index database of auction sale catalogues reveals no sales of works attributed to Masaccio, a Quattrocento artist whose name would have been familiar to readers of Vasari, until 1804.<sup>13</sup> Viewing examples

<sup>9</sup>Thomas Malkin, quoted in Gerald Bentley, *Blake Records* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969). It should be noted that Malkin’s mini-biography of Blake (written in the form of a letter in 1806) begins with the following line: “Mr. William Blake, very early in life, had the ordinary opportunities of seeing pictures in the houses of noblemen and gentlemen, and in the king’s palaces.” This statement is uncorroborated by other records, however, and seems particularly implausible given Blake’s relatively humble background (his father was a hosier).

<sup>10</sup>See Brian Cowan, ‘Art and Connoisseurship in the Auction Market of Later Seventeenth-Century London’, in Neil De Marchi and Hans J. Van Miegroet, eds., *Mapping Markets for Paintings in Europe, 1450-1750* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006) pp. 263-282, for a recent analysis of the composition of auctions and their audiences in this period.

<sup>11</sup>Chapter 6 of this thesis hypothesises that Thomas Patch was an artist who benefited from proximity to Mead’s collection in such a manner.

<sup>12</sup>See ‘Introduction’, notes 8 and 10.

<sup>13</sup>See Chapter 6 for further discussion of the Townley-owned frescoes.

of the work of the primitives through the simulacrum of the reproductive print was also a rare occurrence, for the same reason. As the exploration of the illustrated art book by Christopher Lloyd and Tanya Leger rendered startlingly clear, few books on art produced in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries were illustrated and those that were tended, unsurprisingly, to reproduce works by familiar names such as Raphael, Michelangelo and Titian.<sup>14</sup> Thomas Patch, the subject of Chapter 6 of this thesis, acknowledged in the introduction to his book of engravings after frescoes then attributed to Giotto that he was the “first person to offer prints after this master.”<sup>15</sup>

The tastes of connoisseurs had serious implications for the institutionally-sanctioned course of artistic education in the last three decades of the eighteenth century. The artists responsible for the founding of the Royal Academy in 1768 clearly recognised the inadequacy of the existing provision of artworks accessible to themselves and their peers. The following clause was written in to the institution’s Instrument of Foundation:

There shall be a Library of Books of Architecture, Sculpture, Painting, and all the Sciences relating thereto; also Prints of bas-Reliefs, Vases, Trophies, Ornaments, Dresses ancient & modern Customs & Ceremonies, Instruments of War and Arts, Utensils of Sacrifice, & all other things useful to Students in the Arts.<sup>16</sup>

Additionally, in the Academy’s inaugural year its president, Sir Joshua Reynolds, used the occasion of his first address to students, fellow academicians and interested parties to make a statement regarding his vision as to the institution’s pedagogical provision, claiming that “The principal advantage of an Academy is, that, besides furnishing able men to direct the Student, it will be a repository for the great examples of the Art.”<sup>17</sup> The primary methods by which the Academy obtained works of art, however, were not conducive to the forming of a visual collection representative of the full spectrum of artistic endeavour. The nucleus of the Academy’s collection was the product of another clause in the Instrument of Foundation, that which required all newly-elected members to “[deposit] in the Royal Academy, to remain there, a Picture, Bas relief or other Specimen of his Abilities approved of by the then sitting Council of the Academy.”<sup>18</sup> The other route by which artworks entered the collection were by gift, the two most significant perhaps being the set of full-sized

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<sup>14</sup>Lloyd and Leger, 1980.

<sup>15</sup>Thomas Patch, *La Vita di Giotto* (Florence, 1772) p. 1.

<sup>16</sup>Clause 20, *Instrument of Foundation*, 10th December 1768. RAA/IF.

<sup>17</sup>Joshua Reynolds, *Discourses on Art*, ed. Robert Wark (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997) p. 15.

<sup>18</sup>Clause 3, *Instrument of Foundation*, 10th December 1768. RAA/IF.



copies of the Raphael cartoons executed by James Thornhill and given by the Duke of Bedford in 1800, and Michelangelo's celebrated *The Virgin and Child with the Infant St John* (the 'Taddei Tondo'), bequeathed by Sir George Beaumont in 1830.<sup>19</sup>

In seeking to build a collection of artworks, the Academy was emulating continental examples, both in terms of art theory and institutional models. The Ambrosian *Accademia del Disegno*, founded by Cardinal Federico Borromeo in 1620 and active in the periods 1620-1625 and 1669-1690, for example, operated on the basis of a tripartite framework which encompassed the teaching schools, a library and an art gallery (the latter of these still in existence). Borromeo's personal art collection functioned as a linchpin of learning for students, with nearly of all his paintings being attributed to High Renaissance artists. Similar schemes in which artworks themselves were foregrounded as models to learn from and emulate were in operation in the other leading art academies of Europe. Thus, studying the Old Masters was a deeply ingrained tenet of artistic training by the eighteenth century. Reynolds advised young artists to imitate (which he distinctly differentiated from copying) other artists, stating "when we have had continually before us the great works of Art to impregnate our minds with kindred ideas, we are then, and not till then, fit to produce something of the same species."<sup>20</sup> As is the case on multiple occasions in Reynolds's *Discourses*, though, there is a distinct disconnect between theory and practice.<sup>21</sup> The inadequacy of the Royal Academy's teaching material - in the form of artworks - became a repeated refrain of critics and observers during the first century of its existence. The most infamous example of dissent is undoubtedly that of James Barry, who in 1799 used the occasion of his public lecture given as Professor of Painting as a platform to attack his fellow academicians for prioritising a retirement fund over the purchasing of paintings for the benefit of the students - a view for which he retains the dubious distinction of being the only Academician to have been expelled.<sup>22</sup> Even as late as 1863, however, the situation does not ap-

<sup>19</sup>Sidney Hutchison, *The History of the Royal Academy*, (London: Chapman & Hall, 1968) p. 75.

<sup>20</sup>From the Sixth Discourse, delivered on the 10th December 1774. Joshua Reynolds, *Seven Discourses delivered in the Royal Academy* (London: T. Cadell, 1778) p. 211.

<sup>21</sup>It is worth noting, as Walter Hipple pointed out in an article of 1953, that Reynolds's discourses were full of contradictions, and his position on imitation was no exception. See Walter Hipple, 'General and Particular in the Discourses of Sir Joshua Reynolds: A Study in Method', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 11 (1953) pp. 231-247.

<sup>22</sup>The retirement fund was first proposed in 1796, and Joseph Farington's opinion was that it was "proper in all respects now to establish the fund proposed, which would contribute to encourage artists to devote some of their time to executing works for reputation, which they would do when relieved from apprehension for themselves and their families ... In this, great service would be rendered to the art. - After such provision had been made it would be an object with the Academy to add to their Collections." (11 November 1796, Joseph Farington, *The Diary of Joseph Farington*, ed. by Kenneth Garlick and Angus Macintyre, vol. 3 (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979)). A letter from Joseph Wilton, then Keeper, to the President and Council dated March 2 1799, related the details of Barry's insubordination: "And proclaiming to many Strangers then

pear to have been adequately remedied, judging by Richard Redgrave's observation, given as part of his evidence before a royal commission enquiring into the position of the Royal Academy, that he could not "conceive that any students would trouble themselves to comply with the requirements for admission to [the Royal Academy's painting school] ... when the National Gallery is open to them without those requirements. They have better examples for copying there than they have in the Royal Academy."<sup>23</sup>

The Royal Academy, then, did not seem inclined to spend surplus money on expensive paintings, but it did look towards cheaper forms of visual reproduction. In 1777 it was agreed to start a collection of "the best prints which shall be published in England from this Time forward" and, by 1802 (the date of the first catalogue made of the institution's library), the Academy's book collection was a substantial one which included many illustrated tomes.<sup>24</sup> However, to return to the theoretical premise of copying as a beneficial pedagogical practice, it is important to note that Reynolds was, of course, advocating the study of those esteemed Old Masters in whose work it was commonly held that art had reached its highest expression. As will be discussed in more depth in the conclusion to this thesis, the contemporary discourse surrounding the development of an English school of painting reveals that copying fifteenth-century art (not to mention anything earlier) was highly undesirable, for fear of "infecting our school with a retrograding mania of disfiguring Art", as the influential *Art Union* put it as late as 1847.<sup>25</sup> There seems to have been no policy in place at the Academy to either record the purchase (or gift) or catalogue the holdings of prints until the early twentieth century, which makes it difficult to assess what the institution's acquisition inclinations were.<sup>26</sup> However, as already noted, the issuing of individual prints after early Italian artworks was not a common occurrence in the late eighteenth century.

The titles held in the Royal Academy's library by 1802 certainly reflect the teaching philosophy of the Academy Schools as indicated above, though. Thus, Thomas Patch's *Life of Fra Bartolommeo* was in the collection at this point, presumably because Bartolommeo was a contemporary of Raphael's, but Patch's volumes

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present; particularly to the Students, that the Academy possess'd 16000 hundred pounds; but Alas! Alas! he lamented, & feared, that no part thereof, would ever be employed in the purchase of a few Pictures for their advancement in the Art." Hutchison, 1968, p. 79.

<sup>23</sup> *Report of the Royal Commissioners appointed to inquire into the Present Position of the Royal Academy in relation to the Fine Arts, together with Minutes of Evidence* (London, 1863).

<sup>24</sup> *R.A. Council Minutes*, vol. I, p. 247, quoted in Hutchison, 1963, p. 62.

<sup>25</sup> *The Art Union*, 9 (1847).

<sup>26</sup> Information regarding the Academy's early print buying was communicated by Helena Bonnett, Research Curator at the Royal Academy, via email.

after Giotto, Masaccio and Ghiberti had not been acquired.<sup>27</sup> Those few books in the Academy's collection by 1802 that contained reproductions of paintings by primitives included *L'Etruria Pittrice* (1791), for which a number of plates were engraved by Carlo Lasinio, the art historian, conservator and dealer who would later popularise the frescoes of the Campo Santo in Pisa amongst the English.<sup>28</sup> The library also held the *Serie Di Ritratti Degli Eccellenti Pittori Dipinti Di Propria Mano Che Esistono Nell'Imperial Galleria Di Firenze*, which was published in four parts between 1752-1762 and contained reproductions of the self-portraits of Cranach, Dürer and Giovanni Bellini. This is in contrast with a multiplicity of titles devoted to Raphael, Michelangelo and Titian. It is significant, however, that by 1802 the Academy owned a copy of the 1529 edition of Cristoforo Landino's commentary on Dante's *Divine Comedy*. This included original engravings derived from those present in the first edition of the work (published in 1481) which were in turn based on original drawings by Botticelli.<sup>29</sup> Students and academicians alike had, therefore, the opportunity of seeing contemporaneous reproductions of works by a fifteenth-century Florentine painter, then almost entirely unknown in Britain.<sup>30</sup>

One final item in the Royal Academy's collection warrants mentioning. Although the circumstances of their acquisition are opaque, in the early 1770s the institution acquired by gift a series of casts after panels from Lorenzo Ghiberti's early fifteenth-century 'Gates of Paradise'.<sup>31</sup> A number of these casts were displayed, by order of the council, in the ground-floor room of the academy contemporaneously with the annual exhibition of 1773.<sup>32</sup> Continuing interest in, and appreciation of, them is indicated by their very favourable mention in Joseph Baretti's guide to the Academy; he designated them "much worth noticing" and added a contextualising reference to Michelangelo's epithet.<sup>33</sup> These gates would later become a point of reference for the young men of the incipient Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Patch's volume of engravings after Ghiberti's *Gates of Paradise* was purchased for the RA library at the behest of John Flaxman in 1810. See Chapter 6.

<sup>28</sup>See Chapter 7 for more on Lasinio.

<sup>29</sup>This first edition included a preface in which Landino briefly commented on distinguished Florentine painters and sculptors, including Giotto, Masaccio and Donatello. This preface appears to be absent from the 1529 edition available in the RA Library.

<sup>30</sup>For the rediscovery of Botticelli, see Michael Levey, 'Botticelli and Nineteenth-Century England', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 23 (1960) pp. 291-306.

<sup>31</sup>See Chapter 6 for a theory as to their presence in the academy.

<sup>32</sup>Hutchison, 1968, p. 58.

<sup>33</sup>Joseph Baretti, *A Guide through the Royal Academy* (London, 1781) p. 24.

<sup>34</sup>See the conclusion of this thesis for more information on the Pre-Raphaelites' exposure to early art in the mid nineteenth century.

## Artists as collectors.

The institutional attitude towards using the primitives as a pedagogical tool - embodied by both the Royal Academy's collection and those exhibitions instigated by the British Institution in 1805 for the benefit of young artists which were hung, almost exclusively, with sixteenth- and seventeenth-century masters - was belied by the collections formed by leading artists themselves, and the next section of this chapter will highlight a series of alleged primitives owned by British artists in the eighteenth century. In the majority of cases, these were drawings rather than paintings. Undoubtedly the example of Vasari, who compiled an impressive and comprehensive collection of drawings in the seventeenth century, was a spur for later artists, and collections of drawings leant themselves well to both autodidacticism and the tangible display of connoisseurship, significant issues for eighteenth-century British artists. As Michael Compton asserted in his analysis of William Roscoe's substantial collection of early Italian art, the collector's sale catalogue of 1816 demonstrates both the extent to which many purported early drawings were in circulation in England and the prevalence of their artist pedigrees.<sup>35</sup>

Two of the most prolific and well-known collectors of drawings in eighteenth-century Britain can comfortably be described as amongst the dominant artistic figures of their respective generations, and many of the drawings present in the Roscoe sale catalogue were annotated as having come from their collections. The first is Jonathan Richardson, whose name is more familiar through his significant contributions to the early-eighteenth-century debate on taste and connoisseurship, rather than from his life-long successful practice as a portrait painter.<sup>36</sup> Richardson's theoretical concerns found material expression in his collection of Old Master drawings, numbering nearly five thousand, which he began collecting as early as 1688.<sup>37</sup> Richardson was meticulous regarding the conservation and cataloguing of his collection, and records attest to his having owned more than one hundred drawings attributed to fourteenth- and fifteenth-century artists, many of which are still identifiable in modern collections thanks to his collector's mark. Examples include the *Pope Clement V on horseback* which was attributed to Stefano Fiorentino (active 1347) in Richardson's collection but is now given to the circle or school of Fra Angelico (c. 1395-1450; Fig. 6); a drawing of two men by Bennozzo Gozzoli (Fig. 7); and a study of six draped female figures which Richardson attributed to Giotto but is

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<sup>35</sup>Compton, 1960, p. 33.

<sup>36</sup>See Chapter 5 for a discussion of Richardson's art theory.

<sup>37</sup>On Richardson's collection, see Carol Gibson-Wood, 'A Judiciously Disposed Collection' Jonathan Richardson Senior's cabinet of drawings', in Christopher Baker, Caroline Elam and Genevieve Warwick (eds), *Collecting Prints & Drawings in Europe c. 1500-1750* (Aldershot: Ashgate in association with the Burlington Magazine, 2003).

now given to an unidentified artist and dated c. 1400 (Fig. 8).<sup>38</sup> Like the prominent seventeenth-century Italian collector Padre Sebastiano Resta before him (and from whose collections many of his drawings originated), Richardson created a connoisseurial collection providing a visual history of art from its restoration by Cimabue. He did not think that early Italian art had intrinsic aesthetic worth, describing it as having a “stiff, lame manner which mended little by little ’till the time of Masaccio”, but he appreciated his drawings for their art-historical significance.<sup>39</sup> Incidentally, another artist and collector contemporaneous with Richardson also appears to have acquired examples on paper of the purported work of at least one primitive; a lot in the sale catalogue of the collection of Charles Jarvis, portrait painter to Georges I and II, was given as “8, by Giotto and others”.<sup>40</sup>

To return to Richardson, however; the quality of his collection and the keenness of his eye are evidenced by the continuum which existed between his collection and that of the next great British artist-connoisseur of the eighteenth century, Joshua Reynolds. Many of Richardson’s drawings were bought by Reynolds, prominent examples being the drawing of Giotto’s *Navicella* mosaic in St Peter’s, Rome, which both artists believed to be a preparatory study by the master himself (Fig. 9) and the *Pope Clement V on Horseback* (Fig. 6). The extensive catalogue of the 1795 Reynolds collection sale reveals that he also owned Giovanni Bellini’s oil painting depicting the *Agony in the Garden*, though Reynolds attributed it to Mantegna (Fig. 10) and Francesco Rosselli’s engraving after Botticelli’s *The Assumption of the Virgin*, a rare example of a print after a primitive.<sup>41</sup> A drawing of a Franciscan Monk attributed to the workshop of Benozzo Gozzoli with Reynolds’s mark (probably attributed to Fra Angelico by him, as this was the attribution given in the manuscript catalogue of the drawing’s next owner Richard Payne Knight) is now in the British Museum. Other artists who numbered drawings or paintings by early Italian artists in their personal collections on a smaller scale included the miniaturist Richard Cosway. On two separate occasions, allegedly early works owned by him appeared on the market. Lot 25 of ‘A Catalogue of the Entire Collection of Pictures

<sup>38</sup> All three drawings are now in the British Museum.

<sup>39</sup> Another impetus for his interest in drawings from the early Renaissance could have been his unusual familiarity with the literature of Dante who, as the previous chapter highlighted, referenced the achievements of contemporary artists. See Gibson-Wood, 2000, pp. 86-89.

<sup>40</sup> Sale cat fifteenth day’s sale, lot 1093, March 1740.

<sup>41</sup> For Reynolds as a collector see Editorials, ‘Sir Joshua Reynolds’ Collection of Pictures I, II and III’, *Burlington Magazine*, 86; 87 (1945) pp. 133-4; pp. 210-17; pp. 262-73, Martin Royalton-Kirsch, ‘Reynolds as a Collector’, in Timothy Clifford, Antony Griffiths and Martin Royalton-Kirsch, *Gainsborough and Reynolds in the British Museum*, (London: British Museum Publications, 1978), Sam Smiles, ed., *Sir Joshua Reynolds: The Acquisition of Genius*, exh. cat. (Bristol: Redcliffe Press, 2009) and Donato Esposito, ‘The Print Collection of Sir Joshua Reynolds’, *The Print Quarterly*, 28, (2011), pp. 376-381. The *Agony in the Garden* was bought by William Beckford at the Reynolds collection sale and is now in the National Gallery, London.

of Richard Cosway. Esq R.A ...', was described as "John Bellino, 'The death of Dido'.- This picture is conceived in the grand style of Michael Angelo.- The arms in particular are very finely coloured" and, at a later date, a purported Mantegna drawing was sold.<sup>42</sup> Next, temporally, came Sir Thomas Lawrence (1769-1830), whose behemoth of an Old Masters drawing collection was offered to, but refused by, the British Museum in 1830.<sup>43</sup> This contained thirty drawings (Italian and Flemish) now believed to have been produced between 1300 and 1450, including such rarities as *A Seated Prophet* by Stefano da Verona (1375-1438) and an annunciation by Lorenzo Monaco (formerly attributed to Mariotto di Nardo; Fig. 11). Lawrence was also another link in the chain of leading-artist ownership established by Richardson and continued by Reynolds, owning a number of the drawings detailed above.

Other early Italian drawings in circulation in Britain in the latter half of the eighteenth century resided in the collections of amateur artists. Arguably the best known and most substantial of these was that formed by William Young Ottley. Ottley had formed a notably developed understanding of the Italian primitives in the late eighteenth century thanks to his employment as a draughtsman in the service of the creation of Seroux d'Agincourt's ambitious *Histoire de l'art*.<sup>44</sup> d'Agincourt's tome was published posthumously in 1823 and contained sustained discussions and illustrations of Italian art beginning with Cimabue. Further, Ottley would go on to publish his own art-historical texts in the 1820s which had a focus on the primitives.<sup>45</sup> However, a less publicised but still impressive example was the collection amassed by John Skippe of Overbury Hall (1742-1812), which comprised over seven hundred and fifty drawings and was arranged in such a manner as to indicate a strong interest in the development of art and, possibly, the beginnings of a burgeoning taste for the early Italians. Skippe's collection was populated with the traditional names of any eighteenth-century drawing collection - Salvator Rosa, the Caracci, Sebastiano Ricci, Michelangelo, Raphael - but within it was a small nucleus of works attributed to earlier artists. By far the most important was the *Study of Christ at the Column*, attributed by Skippe to Giovanni Bellini but now given to Mantegna (Fig. 12).<sup>46</sup> Another fifteenth-century drawing, the *Christ's Descent into*

<sup>42</sup>Richard Cosway, *A Catalogue of the Entire Collection of Pictures of Richard Cosway. Esq R.A...* (London, 1791), and *Venus with a bow, pouring out a libation*, now given to 'School of Mantegna' at the V&A (Lugt 629; possibly lot 362, described as by Mantegna in a sale catalogue dated 14-22 Feb 1822), respectively.

<sup>43</sup>For a recent account of Lawrence's collection see Michael Levey, *Sir Thomas Lawrence* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), pp. 304-306.

<sup>44</sup>For Ottley see Brigstocke, Marchard and Wright, eds., 2010 and Previtali, 1964, pp. 175-182.

<sup>45</sup>William Young Ottley, *The Italian School of Design* (London: Taylor and Hessey, 1823) and *A series of plates engraved after the paintings and sculptures of the most eminent masters of the early Florentine school* (London: Colnaghi, 1826).

<sup>46</sup>Now in the Seilern Collection at the Courtauld Institute of Art, London.

*Limbo* which was still considered a Giovanni Bellini at the Skippe collection sale of 1958 (Fig. 13), was complimented by a handful of other works from the same era, including a Dürer *Study of Two Horsemen*.<sup>47</sup> Of more significance, however, are the drawings Skippe believed were by three largely unknown Trecentoists - Guariento (fl. Padua 1338, d. 1367-70), Pietro Cavallini and Agnolo Gaddi (fl. 1369, d. 1396).<sup>48</sup> Comprising five in total, these began the first of Skippe's inauspicious attempts at a "sort of illustrated history of art" - presumably again in emulation of Vasari - the two albums entitled *Disegni I* and *Disegni II*.<sup>49</sup> However, as Arthur Popham pointed out with devastating accuracy in his introductory essay in the catalogue for the sale of the Skippe collection in 1958, Skippe's connoisseurship was in no way to be envied. All five supposed fourteenth-century drawings are now attributed to sixteenth-century artists.<sup>50</sup>

The publication into which many of the drawings detailed above were compiled reveals much about the ways in which such art was processed and understood. *Imitations of Ancient and Modern Drawings* (Figs. 14, 15 and 16) was published in 1798 by the German-born artist Conrad Martin Metz (1749-1827), who had previously had some success in producing volumes of reproductive engravings after the paintings of Parmigianino and Polidoro da Caravaggio.<sup>51</sup> It is worth pointing out that the significant predecessor of and, quite possibly, model for this publication was Charles Rogers's two-volume *A Collection of Prints in Imitation of Drawings* of 1770, which only began with Leonardo.<sup>52</sup> Metz's *Imitations* was dedicated to Benjamin West, another significant artist-collector, whom Metz stated had given him advice, help and free access to his "invaluable collection."<sup>53</sup> Metz also made much of the Richardson provenance of many of the drawings from which he had made engravings, rather unfortunately - given the prevalence of what are now recognised to be misattributions amongst at least the early drawings - eulogising him as follows:

<sup>47</sup>This drawing, now also in the Courtauld's collection, is now given to the workshop of Dürer.

<sup>48</sup>Guariento, particularly, was a name which did not appear in eighteenth-century histories of art.

<sup>49</sup>Arthur Popham, *The Skippe Collection of Old Master Drawings, Illustrated Sale Catalogue* (London: Christie's, 1958) p. 5.

<sup>50</sup>Popham identified the drawing attributed by Skippe to Guariento as by the Bolognese artist Amico Aspertini (1474/5 - 1552) and that to Cavallini as by Alunno di Benozzo, a Florentine artist active in the late fifteenth century. *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup>Conrad Martin Metz, *Imitations of Ancient and Modern Drawings* (London, 1798). This was an enlarged version of a volume published by Metz almost a decade previously which, though having the same title, replicated only 'modern' drawings; the earliest artist in this earlier volume is Leonardo. Metz's other publications were the *Imitations of Drawings, by Parmegiano. In the Collection of His Majesty* (London, 1790) and *Imitations of Drawings, by Caravaggio* (London, 1791).

<sup>52</sup>In the introductory text to his plates Rogers sketched out the *campanilismo* debate as to the origins of Italian art, coming down on the side of Vasari.

<sup>53</sup>Metz, 1798, p. 1.

The ingenious artist, and indefatigable collector, Richardson, has bestowed infinite pains in putting his drawings in the best order, and illustrating them with many useful remarks; and it is very seldom we meet one of them that has the wrong name prefixed to it.<sup>54</sup>

The *Pope Clement V on Horseback* seems to belie Metz's claim for Richardson's particularly sharp connoisseurial skills, as the name Stefano Fiorentino was adopted by Richardson from Padre Resta, who attached it to that artist on only the slender grounds that Fiorentino was alive at the same time as the Pope.<sup>55</sup>

In addition to issues of attribution, Metz's publication is also worth flagging because of the word "Imitations" in the title. Comparison between a number of Metz's etchings and the original drawings from which they were copied - many of which were owned by Metz himself - reveal that he was not averse to altering the drawings, to create what he presumably thought were more appealing compositions. Thus a drawing of the Virgin and Child attributed to Perugino (now given to the circle of Perugino) is augmented in Metz's engraving by the inclusion of two cherub heads at the bottom of the image and the replacement of cloud for the solid object on which the Virgin is seated originally (Figs. 17 and 18).<sup>56</sup> Despite the interferences of his contemporary attitude towards the early drawings, Metz's aim in producing the *Imitations* was an art-historical one, as he sought to correct a deficiency he believed to exist in the extant scholarship:

In the Treatises hitherto given on the Progress of the Imitative Arts, it has been a defect, perhaps not easily remedied, that correct examples have been wanting to illustrate the merits of the artists, and ascertain the periods in which they flourished. A collection of well-attested Drawings, carefully traced and correctly imitated, will, in some measure, answer this purpose; and as the imitation of drawings is a process simple, and in great degree mechanical, I may, without vanity, claim the merit of exactness.<sup>57</sup>

However, Metz sold his entire collection of drawings in 1801 prior to moving to Rome, and those he amassed later were primarily, as he wrote in a letter to Thomas

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<sup>54</sup>Metz, 1798, p. 3.

<sup>55</sup>Lansdowne MS. 802, Liber G, no. 3, discussed in Arthur Popham and Philip Pouncy, *Italian drawings in the British Museum, the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries*, 2 vols. (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1950).

<sup>56</sup>Original drawing in the British Museum.

<sup>57</sup>Metz, 1793, p.1. Metz's volume can perhaps be seen as a response to a call from the Roman art historian Bottari, which is discussed in greater detail in relation to Thomas Patch in Chapter 6 of this thesis.



Lawrence, of the later schools (sixteenth and seventeenth centuries), indicating where his aesthetic interests really were.<sup>58</sup>

## Quantifying the primitives in Britain.

It is almost impossible to arrive at an authoritative figure regarding the number of so-called primitives in circulation in Britain in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. One measure of the low value in which early drawings and paintings were held, and which particularly stymies any attempt to quantify accurately their existence, was what would now be termed inadequate cataloguing procedures in existence for early art. The vast majority of lots are distinguished by their signal lack of information. One common practice was to group together early works and designate them merely “ancient drawings”; another strategy, as demonstrated earlier by the reference to the collection of Charles Jarvis, was to offer a hypothesis as to the name of the artist - given as a fact but often inaccurate - but with no other information, which resulted in lots with titles such as ‘one, by Giotto’.<sup>59</sup> A few significant studies have attempted to estimate roughly the number of primitives passing through the auction houses around the turn of the nineteenth century: Russell and Lygon, looking at exclusively London sales between 1801 and 1837, counted approximately one hundred Trecento and Quattrocento works (with the cut-off point being, roughly, Leonardo) listed for sale, whereas Michael Compton looked at approximately one thousand catalogues covering the period 1795-1815 and found about two hundred Italian primitives, estimating in conclusion that there were probably around five hundred primitives in Britain in the early nineteenth century.<sup>60</sup> Such figures put into context are yet further revealing; for the fifty or so works put up for sale between 1780 and 1847 and ascribed to Giotto, there were around three thousand listed as by Guido Reni.<sup>61</sup> Moreover, the frequency of the repetition of the same names - primarily Giotto, Masaccio, Bellini and Perugino - further reveals the superficial attention given to such artworks and the pitfalls inherent in gleanng accurate visual knowledge of the styles, manners and ideas of the earlier masters. A rather startling example occurs at the late date of 1834, when lot 1182 of the sale of a Mr. Sharp (which took place outside of the metropolis) was listed as “Painting, A Pharisee and Publican, by Van Eyck or Giotto”.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>Metz to Lawrence, 13th May 1825. RA/LAW/4/328.

<sup>59</sup>Metz, for example, acquired one of his ‘Giotto’ drawings at the 1797 sale by Philips of the collection of the Count de Carriere, where it, as lot 0111, was described unhelpfully as ‘One capital by that famous old master Giotto’. Lugt 5617.

<sup>60</sup>Russell and Lygon, 1980 and Compton, 1960, p. 36.

<sup>61</sup>Getty Provenance Index Database.

<sup>62</sup>Lugt 13746a.

In 1767, Winckelmann wrote of the difficulty of gaining visual knowledge of the history of art from the Trecento to the eighteenth century: “The origins, progress and growth of Greek art can be more easily imagined by those who have had the rare opportunity of seeing paintings, and in particular, drawings, ranging from the first Italian painters to our own day.”<sup>63</sup> Undoubtedly the area in which he felt the lack of examples most keenly was the earlier centuries. Around thirty years later William Hazlitt underwent his first visual experience of painting, which he recalled some years hence in the following evocative and sensuous terms:

My first initiation into the mysteries of the art was at the Orleans Gallery: it was there that I formed my taste, such as it is: so that I am irreclaimably of the old school in painting. I was staggered when I saw the works there collected and looked at them with wondering and with longing eyes. A mist passed away from my sight: the scales fell off. A new sense came upon me, a new heaven and a new earth stood before me ... Old Time had unlocked his treasures, and Fame stood portress at the door. We had heard of the names of Titian, Raphael, Guido, Domenichino, the Caracci - but to see them face to face, to be in the same room with their deathless productions, was like breaking some mighty spell - was almost an effect of necromancy.<sup>64</sup>

The subtext of Hazlitt’s account further illustrates the inaccessibility of early Italian art. It took until almost the very end of the eighteenth century for artists and the public to gain direct, unmediated access to the paintings of those Italian masters whose names were familiar to them - those of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>65</sup> It would take another fifty years before it was deemed desirable to exhibit publicly *en masse* those much more unfamiliar masters, the early Italians.<sup>66</sup> Formulating a secure understanding of what visually constituted a Giotto or a Fra Angelico was therefore difficult, if not impossible, in Britain at the turn of the nineteenth century, as is evidenced by the select list of works by the primitives in Britain by 1810 given in the appendix to this thesis. The next chapter will explore the opportunities that artists and other travellers had in Italy to develop such connoisseurship.

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<sup>63</sup> Johann Winckelmann, *Remarks on the History of Ancient Art*, 1767, quoted in Gombrich, 2002, p. 66.

<sup>64</sup> William Hazlitt, ‘On the Pleasures of Painting’, *Table Talk: or, Original Essays* (London, 1821) pp. 26-27.

<sup>65</sup> On the importance of the Orléans collection for British taste and art, see David Bindman, ‘The Orléans Collection and its Impact on British Art’, in Roberta Panzanelli and Monica Preti-Hamard, eds., *The Circulation of Works of Art in the Revolutionary Era, 1789-1848* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2004) pp. 57-66.

<sup>66</sup> The first public exhibition of early Italian art was, as is well known, that of a group included in the annual Old Masters show held by the British Institution in 1848.

## Chapter 4

# The Italian Grand Tour and the Primitives: a case for the supremacy of Florence.

Following the political and religious turbulence of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the significantly more peaceful nature of the succeeding era afforded increased opportunities for the British to travel on the continent. At first almost exclusively the preserve of the aristocracy, the ‘Grand Tour’ was consciously undertaken with the aim of intellectual and moral self-improvement.<sup>1</sup> As the popularity of the Grand Tour exponentially increased, it became one of the dominant, widely-accepted standards for being recognised as a gentleman of taste, an issue that was at the forefront of Georgian thought.<sup>2</sup> It became routine for those travelling on the continent to bring home souvenirs of their travels, which frequently took the form of original works of art, such as a portrait by Pompeo Batoni or a landscape by Claude Lorrain. Another typical souvenir was a direct recording of a view or sight seen and enjoyed by a tourist; for this purpose it became common for well-off travellers to include an artist in their entourage.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, as the eighteenth century progressed, immersion in the visual riches - both natural and man-made - of the Italian peninsula became, in the majority of cases, an unavoidable prerequisite for British artists

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<sup>1</sup>The literature on the Grand Tour is vast. Edward Chaney, *The Evolution of the Grand Tour* (London: Frank Cass, 1998); Jeremy Black, *Italy and the Grand Tour* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003) and Hale, 4th ed., 2005 offer a good introduction to the subject.

<sup>2</sup>See Lord Shaftesbury’s important discourse on the relationship between art, taste and morality, published in 1711. The notion of taste will be explored in the following chapter.

<sup>3</sup>William Kent formed a working relationship with the young aristocrat Thomas Coke in Rome in the early eighteenth century, and John Robert Cozens accompanied first Richard Payne Knight, the scholar, antiquarian and connoisseur, to Switzerland and Italy in 1776 and then William Beckford in 1782, for example.

who wished to forge a successful career back in their home country.<sup>4</sup> Thus for connoisseurs, artists and other tourists, the evolution of the eighteenth-century Grand Tour effected a level of direct engagement with Italian art far surpassing anything that had preceded it.

The classical focus of the Grand Tour has long been noted and indeed emphasised by scholars. For young (and older) men heavily schooled in the classics, Rome and Naples, the sites of Livy, Caesar and Horace, were the unassailable focal points of Italy. Guidebooks such as Joseph Addison's extremely influential *Remarks* emphasised and re-emphasised their bias towards Italy's classical heritage, casting it as an Arcadia from which the modern Englishman had much to learn and, moreover, against which the modern Italy compared quite unfavourably.<sup>5</sup> Much of the eighteenth-century private travel literature - journals and letters - demonstrates a dominant preoccupation with reaching Rome (sometimes to the extent that Florence was barely given a glance). Undoubtedly one of the most famous and dramatic articulations of the overwhelming desire to see Rome is contained within the travel journal of the young Goethe, writing in the 1780s:

Across the mountains of the Tyrol I fled rather than travelled. Vicenza, Padua and Venice I saw thoroughly, Ferrara, Cento, Bologna casually and Florence hardly at all. My desire to reach Rome quickly was growing stronger every minute ...<sup>6</sup>

Once the tourist reached Rome, the reverence for the classical, complemented by the strong interest in the artistic achievements of the High Renaissance, meant that earlier artistic gems, such as Fra Angelico's fresco cycle in the Vatican, were entirely overlooked (Fig. 19).<sup>7</sup> So too are references to Botticelli's frescoes, which decorated the side walls of the Sistine Chapel, absent in eighteenth-century travellers' accounts until close to the turn of the century.

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<sup>4</sup>See Chapter 5 for more detail regarding the opinions of artists who opted out of the Italian experience.

<sup>5</sup>Joseph Addison, *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy* (London, 1705). Horace Walpole famously complained that "Mr Addison travelled through the poets, and not through Italy ... He saw places as they were, not as they are." Letter from Horace Walpole to Richard West, dated 2nd October 1740, in Wilmarth Sheridan Lewis, ed., *Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. 13 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1948) p. 231.

<sup>6</sup>Johann Goethe, *Italian Journey, 1786-1788*, trans. Wystan Hugh Auden and Elizabeth Mayer, (London: Collins, 1962) pp. 128-129.

<sup>7</sup>As Hugh Brigstocke highlighted in a recent and comprehensive study of the sculptor John Flaxman's Italian sketchbooks and journals, Flaxman displayed a significant independence of aesthetic judgement in the early 1780s in his decision to copy elements of the late-thirteenth-century Cavallini mosaics from the Roman church of Santa Maria in Trastevere. Hugh Brigstocke, 'Refocusing the Grand Tour', *Walpole Society*, 72 (2010), p. 6.

Naples, too, was indelibly associated with ancient Rome, particularly following the excavations at nearby Herculaneum instigated by Gavin Hamilton in the mid eighteenth century. As travellers gradually ventured further south, the places and objects of interest remained classical remnants: Pompeii (also rediscovered in the mid-eighteenth century) and the temples of Paestum.<sup>8</sup> Venice, the other city to figure prominently on the Grand Tour itinerary, was celebrated (and then, in some cases, criticised) for its novelty, festivals and its sixteenth-century artistic heritage.<sup>9</sup> Thus in all three cases, other associations could be seen to preclude any interest in the cities' medieval past. Further, that the Rev. John Chetwode Eustace's *A Classical Tour through Italy*, published in 1813 following the caesura engendered by the Napoleonic wars, immediately became the most popular guidebook of the first half of the nineteenth century evidences the continuing dominance of the values of the classical tour.<sup>10</sup>

Indeed, the traditional association between Italy and classical civilisation seems to have constituted a barrier between tourists and medieval and early Renaissance artworks, artefacts and monuments. This estrangement is less pronounced in the case of Florence, however. This issue is alluded to in a recent exploration of the phenomenon of British visitors to Italy during the long eighteenth century, Rosemary Sweet's *Cities and the Grand Tour: The British in Italy, c. 1690-1820*, which has the virtue of being organised in accordance with a comparative geographical framework that enables connections and comparisons to be deduced in the lived tourist experience of the different major cities of the Italian itinerary, even if not having unearthed an abundance of hitherto-unknown primary sources.<sup>11</sup> The main focus of Sweet's book, though, is on the physical fabric of these urban centres, meaning that British responses to Gothic architecture are privileged over other forms of the visual arts. There are, of course, examples of artists copying early Italian artworks in other cities, some of which will be explored later in this chapter, but Florence certainly seems to have dominated, in this respect, over any other single city. Florence's primacy in eighteenth-century documentary material as the location in Italy which encouraged a re-engagement with the primitives will be explored further in this chapter, which aims to demonstrate concomitantly the opportunities available to an artist/tourist to see early Italian art in that country.

<sup>8</sup>Drawings of the temples by Cozens and John Warwick Smith, made in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, survive in the V&A and Tate respectively.

<sup>9</sup>The prime source for the role played by and attributed to Venice during the grand tour remains Bruce Redford, *Venice and the Grand Tour* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996).

<sup>10</sup>Eustace devoted a great deal of space to the Paestum temples, for example, considering them the best examples of their kind outside of Rome.

<sup>11</sup>Rosemary Sweet, *Cities and the Grand Tour: The British in Italy, c. 1690-1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

The dominance amongst British connoisseurs of Giorgio Vasari's unquestionably biased version of the history of Italian art was a significant factor in the correlation between Florence and the primitives. A Florentine by birth, one of Vasari's prevailing aims in the *Vite* was to convince the reader of the truth of his vision of the Florentine origins of the Renaissance. Thus, by the very ethos of the *Vite*, Vasari primed artists and travellers to look out for early Italian art in Florence much more so than anywhere else. An example of Vasari's insistence on the primacy of Florence having purchase in the late eighteenth-century narrative of the rediscovery of the primitives is found in the Italian journal of John Flaxman. The sculptor headed the sixteenth folio of this volume as follows: "Artists of Florence who laboured for the restoration of the Arts."<sup>12</sup> Flaxman's conceptualising of Florence as being the location in which the "restoration of the arts" - his phrase for what we now deem the 'renaissance' - occurred is revealing.<sup>13</sup> He noted no details of artists from or working in the other major artistic centres of Italy within such a framework, and indeed, both the title and content of this section of Flaxman's journal - organised as it is into mini-biographies of selected Florentine artists - are manifestations of the pre-eminence in England of the Vasarian model of Italian Renaissance art. Compounding this was the body of literature which appeared as a counterpoint to Vasari's argument for the centrality of Florence in the story of art's progress, as explored in Chapter 2. Though authors such as Padro Guglielmo Della Valle and Alessandro Da Morrona (Sienese and Pisan respectively) drew their readers' attention to and offered more information about a wider range of early Tuscan primitives such as Duccio, Simone Martini, Guido da Siena and Giunta Pisano in their attempts to prove that the schools of Siena and Pisa, respectively, pre-dated that of Florence, given migrations, diasporas and the peripatetic nature of the lives of early Italian artists they could not avoid treating both Florentine artists and artworks by other Tuscan artists in Florence.

Equally as important as the art-historical literature cataloguing the riches contained within the medieval Florentine churches of Santa Maria Novella, Santa Croce, Santa Trinità and Santa Maria del Carmine, was the opening of a room entirely dedicated to the early Florentine masters in the Uffizi, which had long been a compulsory sight of the Grand Tour itinerary.<sup>14</sup> The *gabinetto di pitture antiche*

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<sup>12</sup>Brigstocke, 2010, p. 32.

<sup>13</sup>The first known usage of the term 'Renaissance' to describe a particular period dates from the mid nineteenth century. See Hilary Fraser, *The Victorians and Renaissance Italy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992) for an exploration of the premise that the Renaissance was a nineteenth-century historical construct, and thus reflected that era's ideologies, interests and preoccupations.

<sup>14</sup>See Jane Whitehead, 'British visitors to the Uffizi', in Paola Barocchi and Giovanni Ragionieri, eds., *Gli Uffizi: quattro secoli di una galleria* vol. 1 (Firenze: L.S. Olschki, 1983) pp. 287-307

came into existence in the 1770s as the fruit of Grand Duke Leopoldo's appointment of the art historian Luigi Lanzi to the position of curator of the antiquarian section of the museum; Lanzi became responsible for the reorganisation of the entire gallery within an historical, didactic framework as his unparalleled illustrated catalogue of the Uffizi collection demonstrates.<sup>15</sup> There had been works by primitives on display in the Uffizi prior to this date, as the historian Edward Gibbon's travel journal evidences, but the precocity of the historical reorganisation of the Uffizi collection is extremely noteworthy, particularly when one considers that Gustav Friedrich Waagen's reorganisation of the Altes Museum in Berlin did not take place until the 1830s, and the British Institution only showed early Italian art in 1848 - and then in a temporary exhibition, rather than on permanent display.<sup>16</sup> The new *Gabinetto* included works by Florentine giants such as Cimabue, Fra Angelico and Botticelli, and began appearing in British travel literature almost immediately. The 1783 English edition of Charles Du Fresnoy's *The Art of Painting*, with annotations by Reynolds, contained an appendix entitled 'A Chronological List of Modern Painters'. This list, authored by Thomas Gray, tabulated the Italian Renaissance painters going back to Cimabue, including columns for their teachers, achievements, the type of works they executed and where these works could be seen.<sup>17</sup> The entry for Fra Angelico included the information that a specimen of his work (the Linaïoli Tabernacle; Fig. 20) could be seen in the room of the ancient painters. To return again to Flaxman, in his Florentine journal of November 1787 he also listed the 'Chamber of Ancient Painting', writing that it "contain[ed] specimens of the Ancient old paintings from the old Greeks before Cimabue to the time of Massaccio [sic], and sculpture of the same ages particularly of a St John and David with the head of Goliath at his feet statues in marble the size of nature by Donatello" (Fig. 21).<sup>18</sup> Flaxman, however, declined to copy any of the works he saw at the Uffizi.<sup>19</sup>

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and Anna Florida, *Forestieri in galleria: visitatori, direttori e custodi agli Uffizi dal 1769 al 1785* (Firenze: Galleria degli Uffizi, 2007) for accounts of tourists at the Uffizi.

<sup>15</sup>Luigi Lanzi, *La Real galleria di Firenze accresciuta e riordinata per comando di S.A.R. l'Arciduca Granduca di Toscana*, ed. by Gabriella Frangini, Chiara Novello and Aurora Romei (Firenze: Amministrazione comunale di Firenze, 1982). See Francis Haskell, *The Ephemeral Museum* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 30-45 for a brief discussion of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century museological approaches to the primitives.

<sup>16</sup>See Georges Bonnard, *Gibbon's Journey from Geneva to Rome: His Journal from 20th April to 2nd October, 1764* (London, 1961) pp. 137-138 for a description of the early Italian paintings Gibbon saw at the Uffizi, which particularly focuses on two Fra Angelicos.

<sup>17</sup>Gray (1716-1771) was a poet and literary scholar who had visited Italy in the company of Horace Walpole between 1739 and 1741.

<sup>18</sup>Transcribed by Hugh Brigstocke, 'Flaxman: Fitzwilliam Journal', *Walpole Society*, 2010, p. 94.

<sup>19</sup>Indeed, according to the documents contained within the Uffizi archives covering the period 1770-1815, no English painters requested the permission of the director to make copies after any of the primitives. One of the earliest references this author found dated from 1848, when an E. Richards made three separate requests to copy the interior figures on Fra Angelico's Linaïoli Tabernacle, another altarpiece by the same painter (possibly the *Coronation of the Virgin*), and a Madonna by Botticelli. Filza LXX, parte 2, 1846, Archivio di Uffizi.

An additional collection of early Italian art - although not organised along historical principles until 1841 - was on display at the *Accademia del Disegno*, which unsurprisingly also attracted a number of British artists.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, there was a strong civic tradition of art exhibitions in Florence. The cloister of SS. Annunziata hosted a number of exhibitions during the eighteenth century at which contemporary artists were invited to display their work and collectors to lend their gems. Through Fabia Borroni Salvadori's transcription of the exhibition catalogue from 1705 it can be seen that although the display was strongly dominated by the traditionally esteemed sixteenth- and seventeenth-century painters, it did also include a handful of examples of Quattrocento art - Giovanni Bellini, Giorgione, Leonardo, Perugino and Dürer are all listed.<sup>21</sup> The name of Ignazio Hugford, an Anglo-Florentine artist, restorer, art dealer and professor (later Consul) at the *Accademia del Disegno* crops up at this juncture.<sup>22</sup> Hugford, probably attracted by the ease and low cost involved in acquiring long-neglected early Italian art, had begun forming an art collection which by the 1760s included works attributed to Starnina, Filippo Lippi, Giotto and Masaccio.<sup>23</sup> He was a regular contributor to the above-mentioned exhibitions, both of his own paintings and those from his collection, and in 1767 he loaned the self-portrait he attributed to Masaccio.<sup>24</sup> Hugford's position at the Accademia meant that he was an essential point of contact in Florence for both artists and connoisseurs visiting the city; Reynolds, Gavin Hamilton and Robert Adams all knew and admired him, and Thomas Patch endorsed him as being "well known for his judgment and practice in paintings as well as for the large Collection of Pictures which he is possessed of."<sup>25</sup> As the chapter in this thesis on Patch ventures to assert, it is not too outlandish to place Hugford as the magnet drawing in a circle of connoisseurs who were beginning to demonstrate a curiosity for 'Gothic' art. The role played by Hugford in the rediscovery of the primitives has not, to date, been fully explored in

<sup>20</sup>See 'History of the Gallery' in Franca Falletti, Marcella Anglani and Gabriele Rossi Rognoni, *Accademia Gallery: the Official Guide* (Firenze: Ministro per i Beni e le Attività Culturali, 1999) pp. 10-19.

<sup>21</sup>Fabia Borroni Salvadori, 'L'esposizione del 1705 a Firenze', *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, 19 (1975) pp. 393-402. Also see Borroni Salvadori, 'Esposizioni d'arte a Firenze dal 1674 al 1767', *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, 18 (1974) pp. 1-166 for a thorough account of the Florentine exhibitions.

<sup>22</sup>For Hugford, see John Fleming, 'The Hugfords of Florence (Part II)', *Burlington Magazine*, 186 (1955) pp. 197-206 and Fabia Borroni Salvadori, 'Ignazio Hugford', *Annali della scuola normale superiore di Pisa*, 13 (1983) pp. 1025-1056.

<sup>23</sup>The above-cited article by Fleming includes a provisional catalogue of Hugford's collection, mainly based on information in the archive of the Uffizi (to which institution Hugford's executors sold a number of his paintings in 1779). Reynolds saw the collection back in 1751, noting in his Florentine sketchbook that "[Hugford] has a good collection of drawings principally the Florentine masters." Joshua Reynolds, 'Italian sketchbook', BMPL 1859,0514.305, f. 14v.

<sup>24</sup>Borroni Salvadori, 1983, p. 1040. See also Chapter 6, note 46.

<sup>25</sup>Patch, 1772, p. 4.



the scholarship on the subject.

Finally, the geographical location of Florence must be taken into account in relation to the argument that particularly facilitated engagement with early Italian art. For those who travelled to the central part of the Italian peninsula by boat, arriving at Livorno, the trip by road from the port town to Florence lent itself to an extended rest stop in Pisa. In addition to the cathedral and the leaning tower, the other compulsory sight in that city was the Campo Santo, conveniently situated within the same complex. The decorative scheme of the burial ground of Pisa, which comprised multiple series of fresco cycles, led Vasari to characterise it as a unified endeavour undertaken by the leading thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Tuscan artists (listed by him as Pietro Lorenzetti, Simone Martini, Benvenuto Gozzoli and Giotto, Fig. 22).<sup>26</sup> This enduring conceit led Franz Kugler to remark that the Campo Santo was “important above all others in the history of Art in the fourteenth century.”<sup>27</sup> As Hilary Gatti made clear in her exploration of British reactions to the monument, the Campo Santo as a literary *topos* dated back to the middle ages.<sup>28</sup> The primary response of British travellers to the burial ground was historical; most focused on the tradition that it contained earth from the holy land.<sup>29</sup> However, Edward Wright’s early account of the Campo Santo dwelt most atypically on the fresco cycles, cataloguing the scriptural subjects represented and identifying the different masters before offering a surprisingly thorough visual analysis of them.<sup>30</sup> By the turn of the century a truly sympathetic aesthetic appreciation of the Campo

<sup>26</sup>Almost all of Vasari’s Campo Santo attributions have now been disproved. The German art historian Ernst Förster produced documentary evidence contradicting Giotto’s authorship of the Job frescoes as early as 1835; his suggestion that they were painted by Francesco da Volterra - active over two hundred years after Giotto - was given credence by the vast majority of nineteenth-century scholars, including Kugler and Lord Lindsay.

<sup>27</sup>Franz Kugler, *A Handbook of the History of Painting*, ed. by Charles Eastlake, Book 1 (London, 1842) p. 68. Anna Jameson echoed this sentiment in her *Memoirs of Early Painters* of 1845, believing that the Campo Santo frescoes were “yet more direct and important than that of the paintings in the church of Assisi.” Anna Jameson, *Memoirs of Early Painters* (London, 1845) p. 63. That the Campo Santo frescoes - now considered of far less art-historical significance - received considerably more attention than those at Assisi was in no small way due to their fortuitous location along the conventional route taken by British travellers in Italy. Further, in the early nineteenth century there was a concerted drive amongst Italians living in Pisa to promote the Campo Santo as a monument of especial art-historical significance. This was led by Carlo Lasinio, the first conservator of the Campo Santo (from 1807 until his death in 1838). In 1812 he published a series of prints of the frescoes that were widely disseminated amongst the British thanks to his activities as a cicerone and dealer. See Donata Levi, ‘Carlo Lasinio, Curator, Collector and Dealer’, *Burlington Magazine*, 135 (1993) pp. 133-148 for a discussion of Lasinio’s circle of British connoisseurs who shared an interest in early Italian art.

<sup>28</sup>Hilary Gatti, ‘Il campo santo di Pisa nella letteratura Inglese’, *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa*, 16 (1986) pp. 239-306.

<sup>29</sup>Such as Fynes Morrison and Robert Dallington, who both visited Italy at the end of the sixteenth century. Excerpts from their published travel accounts are reprinted by Gatti, 1986, pp. 239-306.

<sup>30</sup>Edward Wright travelled in Italy between 1720 and 1722, publishing his observations in 1730.

Santo and its decorative scheme was almost the norm. This marked shift in British taste was inextricably linked to the growth of interest in the Middle Ages and the preoccupation with death, both of which characterised the Romantic sensibility.<sup>31</sup>

Furthermore, the Campo Santo appears to have afforded one of the most intense artistic stimuli of any Gothic monument at the end of the eighteenth century. Numerous British artists and amateurs made direct copies after the frescoes, an example of the latter being William Young Ottley, who would later become an extremely important figure in the reassessment of Trecento and Quattrocento art.<sup>32</sup> Ottley travelled in Italy between 1791 and 1798 and during this period was closely associated with the sculptor John Flaxman; indeed the two men studied the art of the Campo Santo together.<sup>33</sup> It is unsurprising that Flaxman and Ottley were so closely associated; both men were true pioneers in their extremely early aesthetic (as opposed to historical) interest in Trecento art. For Flaxman, it was the “beautiful distinctness” of the art of Cimabue and Giotto that was so visually appealing.<sup>34</sup> Early Italian art was entirely harmonious with the personal aesthetic he was developing, based on simple forms and clarity of outline.<sup>35</sup> The publication of Lasinio’s engravings after the frescoes in the early nineteenth century also made them much more accessible for artists in Britain. Notably, as Robyn Cooper related, John Constable, who never went to Italy, made a “large copy after the Friends of Job to illustrate one of his lectures on the history of landscape painting.”<sup>36</sup> Perhaps of

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<sup>31</sup>This connection was made and expounded upon by Robyn Cooper in her definitive essay on nineteenth-century British responses to the Campo Santo. See Robyn Cooper, “‘The Crowning Glory of Pisa’: Nineteenth-Century Reactions to the Campo Santo”, *Italian Studies*, 37 (1982) pp. 72-100.

<sup>32</sup>For example, Anna Jameson and John Ruskin, both authorities on early Italian art, made copies after the Campo Santo frescoes in the nineteenth century. Clearly, the artistic interest in the Campo Santo was not confined to the British. In the early nineteenth century the young German artists who formed the *Lukasbruder* made copies after the frescoes there, as did Ingres and Canova. The edition of the Walpole Society journal referenced earlier in relation to John Flaxman also analyses William Young Ottley’s Italian sketchbooks and his later publication *The Italian School of Design*, published in 1814, which included copies made after primitives such as Cimabue, Giotto and the Lippis.

<sup>33</sup>Brigstocke cites an instance of Ottley making a sketch after the Crucifixion and an angel at the Campo Santo in Flaxman’s sketchbook. Brigstocke, 2010, p. 17. Margaret Whinney, in an article on Flaxman that has not been entirely superseded by Brigstocke *et al*, catalogued all the copies after Italian art that appear in Flaxman’s surviving Italian sketchbooks; at the Campo Santo, Flaxman made studies of the *Last Judgement* and the *Triumph of Death*, then attributed to Orcagna. Margaret Whinney, ‘Flaxman and the Eighteenth Century’, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 19 (1956), pp. 280-281.

<sup>34</sup>Quoted by Sarah Symmons, ‘The Spirit of Despair: Patronage, Primitivism and the Art of John Flaxman’, *The Burlington Magazine*, 117 (1975), p. 648.

<sup>35</sup>This aesthetic reached its fullest expression in Flaxman’s engraved illustrations to an edition of Dante’s *The Divine Comedy*, published in 1792, and the Homeric epics *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* (1793 and 1795), which were conceived almost purely in terms of outline. A recent exhibition explored the relationship between Flaxman’s aesthetic and the work of Donatello and Masaccio; see Tritz and Kessler, 2009.

<sup>36</sup>Cooper, 1982, pp. 78-79.

more significance is the fact that Lasinio's prints have traditionally been considered as the epiphany of the Pre-Raphaelite movement; interestingly, Rossetti *et al* reserved their highest praise for those frescoes attributed to Benozzo Gozzoli, as opposed to those attributed to Giotto which were traditionally the more esteemed. The influence of Lasinio's engravings was attested to in the first-hand testimonies of various members of the Brotherhood.<sup>37</sup>

Discussion of the Pisan Campo Santo raises an important question regarding comparable extant examples of Trecento and Quattrocento fresco cycles, and particularly those at Padua and Assisi. A recent visual mapping of the cities visited by travellers on the eighteenth-century tour revealed that Padua attracted some of the highest tourist attention of the 'secondary' Italian cities (Rome, Naples, Venice and Florence being the primary ones).<sup>38</sup> The presence and particularly the contents of the Arena Chapel went largely unremarked upon, however, though its setting was often referenced. This can be attributed to a particularly unpropitious situation of private ownership which precluded access to the chapel for all but, presumably, the most determined of tourists.<sup>39</sup> Whether someone such as John Skippe (mentioned in Chapter 3) - a drawing by whom attests to his having looked at the Giotto frescoes during his tour of Italy between 1772 and 1773 (Fig. 110) - visited the chapel as a footnote to seeing the remains of the Roman arena, following perhaps a fortuitous encounter with a custodian of the chapel's keys, or had read his Vasari and perhaps one of the eighteenth-century Paduan guidebooks to discuss the chapel and went with the intent of seeing Giotto's work, is unknown.<sup>40</sup> As for Assisi, it did not figure in the average tourist experience until the Grand Tour itinerary underwent a significant diversification in the early nineteenth century. The addition of a number of previously-ignored Italian towns and cities to many tourist itineraries can be attributed to a confluence of factors - increased familiarity with the country, a desire to differentiate one's Italian experience from that of the masses, increasing improvement of the country's transport infrastructure, and the proliferation of scholarship concerning early modern Italian history, for example.<sup>41</sup> The travel diaries of the

<sup>37</sup>See, for example, Hunt, 1905, p. 133.

<sup>38</sup>Part of the 'Grand Tour Travellers' digital humanities project at Stanford University led by Giovanna Ceserani ([www.republicofletters.stanford.edu/casestudies/grandtour.html](http://www.republicofletters.stanford.edu/casestudies/grandtour.html)).

<sup>39</sup>See Paula Inia, 'De Arenakapel te Padua in de negentiende eeuw: bezit en behoud van een kunstwerk', *Incontri*, 11 (1996), pp. 11-21 and Alessandro Prosdocimi, 'Il comune di Padova e la Cappella degli Scrovegni nell'Ottocento. Acquisto e restaro agli affreschi', *Bollettino del Museum Civico di Padova*, 49 (1960-1961) pp. 1-225 for accounts of the chapel's history, with particular focus on the intervention by the comune in its fortunes in the nineteenth century.

<sup>40</sup>The unpublished album in the department of prints and drawings at the British Museum, signed and dated 1773 by Skippe, comprises thirty-one pen and ink drawings, with brown wash. The majority of those - twenty-nine drawings in total - are studies made after Mantegna's Ovetari chapel frescoes, executed by the artist between 1448 and approximately 1457 in the church of the Eremitani, Padua. One is a copy after the lower half of Giotto's *Lamentation* fresco.

<sup>41</sup>See Black, 2003 (particularly Chapter One) and Sweet, 2013 for an overview of the general

aristocrat and writer on art Lord Lindsay, which span multiple trips to Italy in the 1830s and 1840s, demonstrate that his overriding preoccupation with the Basilica of San Francesco at Assisi and its iconography was sparked by the publication of Alexis-Francois Rio's seminal text *De l'art Chrétien* in 1836.<sup>42</sup> Although Goethe had visited the town over sixty years previously, his interest was solely focused on a classical Temple of Minerva in the location and he entirely abjured the opportunity to visit the basilica, describing his "pass[ing] with aversion the mass of churches (in one of which the remains of St Francis are resting) piled up like a Babel on top of each other."<sup>43</sup>

Particularly in the eighteenth century, then, Florence appears to have been the prime locus for encountering primitives, though admittedly it could be a challenge to marry up works mentioned by Vasari with the eighteenth-century fabric of the churches in which they were allegedly sited. Although this was the period before the wholesale suppressions of ecclesiastical institutions by the Napoleonic authorities, and religious houses were therefore still extant with their accumulated stores of property and land intact, the devaluation of early Italian art, apparent in Vasari's era through the supplanting of paintings by the primitives with newer works, meant that such art was frequently relegated to side chapels, cloisters, conventual spaces or sacristies.<sup>44</sup> The difficulty in accessing such art is undoubtedly one strand of the answer to a counter-factual question raised in the course of this investigation - why did artists not pay *more* attention to early Italian artists and art during the Grand Tour period? The comparative ready accessibility of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century art was, of course, that in accordance with the prevailing taste for the grand manner, in demand by British patrons both in Italy and at home, and constraints of time and money may well have precluded artists the leisure of exploring art history not so directly related to their output. As the German Romantic writer Schlegel commented in *On Raphael* (1803), his revisionist essay on the canon of taste, whilst "the mere art-lover will easily prefer the earlier period of the Italian School ... the practising painter cannot afford to be so exclusive."<sup>45</sup>

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mutations in Grand Tour itineraries.

<sup>42</sup>See Nicolas Barker, Hugh Brigstocke and Timothy Clifford, *'A Poet in Paradise': Lord Lindsay and Christian Art*, exh. cat. (Edinburgh: National Gallery of Scotland, 2000).

<sup>43</sup>John Gage, ed., *Goethe on Art* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980).

<sup>44</sup>The diaspora of Italian artworks engendered by Napoleonic looting provided one stimulus for the revival of interest in early Italian art, as many scholars have noted, through its rendering such work publicly visible. Extremely large Italian altarpieces were removed from Florence to Paris (see Chapter 7 for some specific examples), and Gombrich cited a source which records "a dealer on the Piazza Navona in Rome [who] had a store of no fewer than twenty thousand paintings derived from secularized monasteries", which would have spanned the epoch of the Renaissance. Gombrich, 2002, p. 104.

<sup>45</sup>Gombrich, 2002, p. 106.

Whilst Schlegel's statement was somewhat paradoxical - for if the lover of art really did "easily prefer" earlier art, surely that preference would filter down to their patronage of modern art? - his acknowledgement of the demands placed on painters to conform to the dominant style practised at the turn of the century was unassailable. The struggle of eighteenth-century British artists to gain commissions and supplant old master paintings with their own productions as desirable commodities in the eyes of connoisseurs was part of the protracted wrestle for authority over taste during the period. The next chapter will explore this issue with particular reference to the roles accorded to and carved out by artists in the debate.

## Chapter 5

# British Artists and Theories of Taste in the Eighteenth Century.

TASTE, a Faculty of Discerning. *To have a good Taste for any Thing, to discern and judge well of a Thing.*

Nathaniel Bailey, *Dictionarium Britannicum*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (London, 1736).

TASTE. n.1. [from the verb.] 5. Intellectual relish or discernment.

Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, 10th ed., vol. IV., (London, 1822) p. 814.

The above dictionary definitions, spanning almost a century, illustrate that the definition of the word ‘taste’ in its metaphorical sense, as a form of judgement and discrimination, was a fixed and desirable norm throughout the long eighteenth century.<sup>1</sup> There were, of course, many other concepts and ideas that remained constant throughout the period, but two other particularly relevant norms for this thesis were, first, the sense of the desirability of both individuals and society as a whole cultivating taste and, second, the cultural anxieties around luxury which led commentators to view taste as the faculty which raised man above the gratification of mere appetite or greed. What was not fixed, however, was a shared standard of taste, and the desire to remedy this pervades the cultural history of the era. Indeed, in the first half of the century the reception of art was of equal importance to its production as an issue of debate.

The Age of Enlightenment (c. 1650-1800) witnessed the beginning of man’s

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<sup>1</sup>This explicit connection is widely credited to the seventeenth-century writer Balthasar Gracian (1601-1657).

questioning of received knowledge and established authority, and his recourse instead to reason and empirical observation.<sup>2</sup> This transformation manifested itself in various arenas, including that of aesthetic criticism - as Ernst Cassirer articulated, the eighteenth century was “[no] less fond of calling itself the “century of criticism” [than the “century of philosophy”].”<sup>3</sup> The eighteenth century witnessed the emergence of theories of taste which ranged across the spectrum from those according with Enlightenment philosophy to those perpetuating the social, political and cultural authority of the elite, and the concept of ‘taste’ has been debated, appraised and reappraised since it became a central theoretical and aesthetic term in that period.<sup>4</sup> The debate on taste was approached from a multiplicity of perspectives: contributors included philosophers, politicians and connoisseurs. The notion of artists as taste-makers, however, is what is at issue here. In eighteenth-century aesthetic discourse centred on taste which sought to establish and codify both what constituted good taste and also which social group(s) were regarded as qualified to make judgements of taste, what position were artists accorded? Furthermore, beginning with Jonathan Richardson in the 1710s when artists themselves publicly infiltrated this discourse, what position did they assign themselves? Thus this chapter is not concerned with the standards of taste debated in the eighteenth century, but rather, in Ronald Paulson’s words, taste’s “politics and power ... who has or should have the authority to judge or determine it.”<sup>5</sup> Concomitant to wider social shifts in the period under examination, such as of the increasing “semantic indeterminacy of the [term] gentleman”, the status of native artists altered dramatically, as did their authority as arbiters of taste.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Kant’s analogy between the pre-Enlightenment period and immaturity succinctly conveys the aims and aspirations of Enlightenment theorists: “Immaturity is man’s inability to use one’s own understanding without the guidance of another.” Immanuel Kant, ‘An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?’, *Berlinische Monatsschrift*, 12 (December 1784) pp. 481-494.

<sup>3</sup>Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, trans. Fritz Koelin (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951), p. 275.

<sup>4</sup>Enlightenment theories of taste predicated on universality - or the idea that the ability to appreciate art belonged to every individual, due to the concept of a common human nature - were assailed and largely deconstructed by twentieth-century scholars. See Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (London: Routledge, 1984). For general discussions of taste, see the following literature. Dickie George, *The Century of Taste: The Philosophical Odyssey of Taste in the Eighteenth Century* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) traces the development and decline of the subjective concept of taste, which replaced objective notions of beauty in eighteenth-century philosophy. Laurence Lipking, *The Ordering of the Arts in Eighteenth-Century England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), Pears, 1982, Daniel Cottom, ‘Taste and the Civilised Imagination’, *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 39 (1981), pp. 367-380, Robert Jones, *Gender and the Formation of the Taste in Eighteenth-Century Britain: the Analysis of Beauty* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998) and Rochelle Gurstein, ‘Taste and “the Conversible World” in the Eighteenth Century’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 61 (2000) pp. 203-221 offer other explorations of the meaning of the term ‘taste’ in the eighteenth century.

<sup>5</sup>Ronald Paulson, *Hogarth: Art and Politics, 1750-1764*, vol. III (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 1993), p. 121.

<sup>6</sup>The above phrase is taken from the following historiographical review article: Lawrence E.

Although the historiography of British aesthetics necessarily encompasses philosophers of the seventeenth century, Anthony Ashley Cooper, 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury, is widely recognised as England's first influential aesthetician.<sup>7</sup> Shaftesbury's *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions and Time*, first published in 1711, was a collection of essays addressing a variety of issues integral to the self-conscious social change that characterised the 'new England' following the Glorious Revolution of 1688. In Shaftesbury's discussion of the arts and the faculty of judgement, following his characterisation of the rules of art as "rigid" he implicitly imposed strict parameters concerning who could be considered a man of taste.<sup>8</sup>

By Gentlemen of *Fashion*, I understand those to whom a natural good Genius, or the Force of good Education, has given a *Sense* of what is *naturally graceful* and *becoming*. Some by mere Nature, others by Art and Practice, are Masters of an Ear in Musick, an Eye in Painting, a Fancy in the ordinary things of Ornament and Grace, a Judgement in Proportions of all kinds, and a general good Taste in most of those Subjects which make the Amusement and Delight of the ingenious People of the World.<sup>9</sup>

The connection made by Shaftesbury between the words 'gentlemen' and 'taste' early on in his narrative is revealing.<sup>10</sup> A recurring trope in eighteenth-century discourse on taste was that only gentlemen (defined by Daniel Defoe as "someone BORN (for there lies the essence of quality) of some known, or Ancient family")<sup>11</sup> -

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Klein, 'Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth Century', *The Historical Journal*, 45 (2002) pp. 869-898. For a tripartite investigation of the mutability of terms of class distinction in the eighteenth century see Penelope Corfield, 'Class by Name and Number in Eighteenth-Century England', *History*, 72 (1987) pp. 38-61; idem, 'Dress for Deference and Dissent: Hats and the Decline of Hat Honour', *Costume*, 23 (1989) pp. 64-79 and idem, 'The Rivals: Landed and Other Gentlemen', in Negley Harte and Roland Quinault (eds.), *Land and Society in Britain, 1700-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996) pp. 1-33.

<sup>7</sup>Jerome Stolnitz's three essays concerning Shaftesbury, published during 1961 and in *Philosophical Quarterly II*, the *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* and the *Journal of the History of Ideas* respectively, have long been considered the canonical literature on Shaftesbury's contribution to aesthetic theory. For a more contemporary, full-length and wide-ranging study of Shaftesbury's thought, see Laurence Klein, *Shaftesbury and the Culture of Politeness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

<sup>8</sup>"The *art* itself is severe; the *rules* rigid." (from 'Advice to an Author.') Anthony Ashley Cooper, *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions and Time*, 2nd ed., vol. I (London, 1714) p. 340.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 135.

<sup>10</sup>Given the nature of Shaftesbury's language and cultural references, it seems that the audience he addressed in his essays was comprised of his peers, fellow gentlemen. It has been argued, however, that the focus of the *Characteristicks* should be interpreted as more democratic: David Marshall, 'Shaftesbury and Addison: criticism and the public taste', in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: The Eighteenth Century*, Hugh Nisbet and Claude Rawson, eds. (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005) pp. 633-657.

<sup>11</sup>Daniel Defoe, *The Compleat English Gentleman* (London, 1729) p. 13. 'Gentleman' became



the only social group with the leisure, money and (it was often argued) inclination to refine their taste - could be considered adequate judges of the arts. This had significant implications for contemporary English artists, the vast majority of whom did not qualify as gentlemen, in either the traditional sense (noble birth) or within the more progressive interpretation of the term which allowed for the inclusion of those with a certain standard of education. Indeed Shaftesbury's conviction that it was patrons, not artists, who should be the arbiters of taste was made explicit in a publication of 1713 - *A Notion of the Historical Draught or Tablature of the Judgement of Hercules* - which minutely detailed the instructions given by Shaftesbury to the Neapolitan painter Paolo de' Mattheis regarding the execution of a history painting.<sup>12</sup> In denying the artist the right to invention, he thus also denied the artist the need for the education and learning that he deemed necessary for a man of taste.

Equally problematic for artists was Shaftesbury's unswerving belief that good taste, and therefore the enjoyment of art, was analogous to virtue. A man who could recognise "a Beauty in *outward Manners and Deportment*" could train or refine this ability to recognise "a Beauty in *inward Sentiments and Principles*."<sup>13</sup> Given that Shaftesbury publicly characterised modern English artists as "illiterate, vulgar and scarce sober", it is fair to deduce that he did not consider them to be virtuous men.<sup>14</sup> The Shaftesburian formula for the advancement of the visual arts in England, then, was dependant instead on the agency of learned patrons who, by taking an interest in the arts and refining their own taste, would direct the productions of artists. This formula explicitly relegated artists to mere mechanical status.

An almost contemporaneous contradiction of the Shaftesburian civic-humanistic view, which focused on the patron or spectator rather than the maker, was set out by an English artist who was decidedly neither vulgar nor illiterate, judging by contemporary accounts of his character. Jonathan Richardson, as we have seen, published three influential and innovative pieces of literature on various aspects of the visual arts between 1715 and 1724, and in the first of these - *An Essay on the Theory of Painting* - controversially argued that artists, alongside aristocrats, could be arbiters of taste.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, whilst setting out his motivation for publishing the *Essay*,

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a contentious term later in the era, as referred to earlier in this chapter; the artist Jonathan Richardson, who will be discussed in depth shortly, certainly did not come from an established family and yet publicly designated himself a gentleman.

<sup>12</sup>Paolo de' Mattheis, *The Choice of Hercules*, 1711-1712, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

<sup>13</sup>Shaftesbury, vol. III, 1714, p. 148.

<sup>14</sup>Quoted in Brewer, 1997, p. 211. Later readers of Shaftesbury were well aware of the enduring elitism of his theory: "It [Shaftesbury's definition of taste] distinguishes the polite Part of the World from the Vulgar, who cannot participate in it." Philip Skelton, *The Candid Reader* (Dublin, 1744) p. 24. Being labelled vulgar was an impenetrable barrier to social mobility and recognition.

<sup>15</sup>The contributions made by Richardson to art theory have, somewhat surprisingly, tended to be

Richardson appears to have been claiming superiority of aesthetic discrimination for artists above their patrons:

... if moreover what I write may hereafter happen to be of use to anyone else, whether it be to put a Lover of Art in a Method to judge of a Picture, (and which in most things a Gentleman may do altogether as well as a Painter) ...<sup>16</sup>

In her monograph on the artist, Carol Gibson-Wood emphasises the universality of Richardson's texts. The vocabulary and examples he used in the *Essay* were accessible to a middle-class readership and not predicated on existing knowledge of art, and Richardson was very much concerned with convincing this rising consumerist power of the intellectual, in addition to the decorative, value of paintings. Given this context, then, one could hypothesise that Richardson's concern was to flatter his *bourgeois* audience by drawing an analogy between them and artists, who were often of the same class, to the detriment of the patricians.<sup>17</sup> The explicitness of this suggestion is startling. It must be emphasised, however, that Richardson was not fundamentally opposed to aristocratic consumption of the visual arts *per se* (to be so would have been, of course, to deprive himself of lucrative commissions), but, rather, against the entrenched belief that only the nobility was entitled to consume and, almost more importantly, pronounce on art. Richardson and Lord Shaftesbury disagreed on a number of fronts regarding the visual arts, but most of all in relation to taste or the faculty of judgement. Both writers had a deeper than ordinary familiarity with the writings of John Locke, but only Richardson propagated Locke's contention of the empirical origins of knowledge.<sup>18</sup>

*An Essay on the Theory of Painting* thus marked the beginning of a dialogical relationship which occurred in the public sphere (as defined by Jürgen Habermas)

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downplayed and even completely dismissed in much of the survey literature on the topic (Mosche Barasch, *Modern Theories of Art, 1: From Wincklemann to Baudelaire*, (New York and London: New York University Press, 1990) pp. 74-75: "Most parts of the *Essay* do not offer any new message. The student of art theory feels he is treading familiar ground", for example). Carol Gibson-Wood, however, redressed this imbalance in her monograph of Richardson, which offers an exhaustive biographical and analytical account of her subject and his writings. Carol Gibson-Wood, *Jonathan Richardson: Art Theorist of the English Enlightenment* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000).

<sup>16</sup> Jonathan Richardson, *An Essay on the Theory of Painting*, 2nd ed. (London, 1725), pp. 9-10.

<sup>17</sup> This theory is supported by Richardson's eschewing of a dedication - which would normally have been addressed to a patron of superior social standing - in the *Essay*. Gibson-Wood discusses Richardson's Lockean rejection of patronage (which included twice turning down the position of painter to the King) at length (see pp. 86-89 in particular).

<sup>18</sup> In *An Essay on Human Understanding*, published in 1690, the philosopher John Locke explicated his contentious belief that innate knowledge did not exist, drawing an analogy between initial human understanding and "white Paper, void of all Characters", and contended rather that all knowledge was a product of experience. See John Marshall, *John Locke: resistance, religion and responsibility* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) for a synoptic account of Locke's life and works.

between artists and writers in which the concept of good taste was debated within an Enlightenment framework predicated on the belief of equal ability. The gain for artists was obvious - in seeking to open up the field of judgement (and Richardson's *Two Discourses* (published in 1719) explicitly set out to instruct the reader in "how to judge of the Goodness of a picture"), they hoped to increase their consumer base as well as augment their professional and social status. So convinced was Richardson of the infallibility of his own aesthetic judgement and knowledge of painting that he claimed it outright in the preface to the *Essay*'s second edition:

THIS Book being out of Print, and a new Edition desired, I have Re-touched it: The Publick did forgive the Incorrectnesses of an Author that was endeavouring to Serve Them, together with a Noble, Useful and Delightful Art, but who pretends only to write as a Painter, and a Gentleman; This Indulgence however has not encourag'd me to let any faults pass that I have not observ'd, so that I hope their Number is somewhat diminished; And I must do myself the right to Say that I have had the Pleasure of finding I had nothing to Retract, which I should not have fail'd to have done had I discover'd any wrong Judgement.<sup>19</sup>

This confidence had no doubt been reinforced by the positive reception of his last foray into literature on the visual arts, *An Account of Some of the Statues, Bas-Reliefs, Drawings and Pictures in Italy*, which was co-authored with his eldest son and published in 1722. The *Account* is a textual manifestation of Richardson's 'method', as exercised by his son, of assessing the value of artworks. It was one which became enormously influential, meaning that - by extension - the Richardsons' judgements of taste were influential too. Winckelmann's written testimony that the *Account* was the best guidebook to the art treasures of Italy has frequently been cited, and as his approbation indicates the guide's commentary did not depart radically from the dominant classical ideology of the early decades of the Grand Tour.<sup>20</sup> Antique statuary and Raphael consistently received the highest praise from the authors, and the reader was primarily directed to the productions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, iii.

<sup>20</sup> "For all its many deficiencies and errors, however, [Richardson's] book is the best we have." Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *History of the Art of Antiquity*, trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave, (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2006) p. 73. The Richardsons acknowledged their conformity to established standards of taste in the guide's Preface: "But after all We do not differ from the General Voice, or other Writers, so much as it may be thought at First Sight." Richardson senior and Richardson junior, 1722, unnumbered page (preface).

<sup>21</sup> The *Account*, unsurprisingly, reflects Richardson's ideals of artistic worth. His belief that painters before Masaccio exhibited "a stiff, lame manner" is manifested in the paucity of references to the Italian primitives in the guidebook - almost one hundred works attributed to Raphael are noted and around forty by "Annibale Caracci" in contrast to one each by Giotto, Andrea Orcagna and Cavallini, for example. The discussion of Giotto's *Navicella* does single out the figure of the

It is clear that, as Gibson-Wood convincingly argues, Jonathan Richardson senior set a new course for artists of the first half of the eighteenth century in their attempts to raise their status and improve their prospects. Moreover, as has been demonstrated, Richardson was the first professional English artist to contribute to the debate on taste, previously populated by philosophers, men of letters and gentlemen, thereby setting the precedent for future artist-written forays into such matters.<sup>22</sup> It is ironic, then, that his work has largely been eclipsed by the eighteenth century's next artist-writer - William Hogarth.

Taking his cue from Richardson, one assumes, Hogarth began from the premise that he had the inherent authority to shape taste, the subtitle of his *Analysis of Beauty* (published in 1753) being: "written with a view of fixing the fluctuating Ideas of Taste."<sup>23</sup> Moreover, the justification for his claim to being an authority on taste, as given in the Preface, was solely and simply that he was a professional artist. Hogarth launched a polemical *ad hominem* attack on those preceding him who had presumed to write on the subject of taste in art without the requisite practical knowledge:

The nature of many parts of [understanding why man considers one thing beautiful and another ugly] cannot possibly come within the reach of mere men of letters; otherwise those ingenious gentlemen who have recently published treatises upon it (and who have written much more learnedly than can be expected from one who never took up the pen before) would not so soon have been bewilder'd in their account of it, and obliged so suddenly to turn into the broad, and more beaten path of moral beauty; in order to extricate themselves out of the difficulties they seem to have met with in this: and withal forced for the same reasons to amuse their readers with amazing (but often misapplied) encomiums on deceased painters and their performances; wherein they are continually discoursing of effects instead of developing causes; and after many

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fisherman for especial praise and comment on the beauty of the work, but this is undoubtedly linked to Richardson senior owning a drawing of it that had descended from Vasari's own collection, and Vasari having himself praised the mosaic, as suggested in Chapter 3.

<sup>22</sup>This was not, of course, true in other European countries, which had much more robust and democratic traditions of public discourse concerning the visual arts. As Chapter II of this thesis intimated, Italian artists played a leading role in describing and theorising the visual arts from the fifteenth century onwards.

<sup>23</sup>Although scholars are largely agreed on the antipathetical nature of the responses of Richardson and Hogarth to the influence in England of continental models of art production, consumption and theories (see, for example, the discussion of the two artists in Brewer, 1997, pp. 211-218), it has also been suggested - although not attested to as in the case of Joshua Reynolds - that Hogarth also drew inspiration from Richardson's writings.

prettinesses, in very pleasing language, do fairly set you down just where they first took you up; honestly confessing that as to GRACE, the main point in question, they do not even pretend to know any thing of the matter. And indeed how should they? when it actually requires a practical knowledge of the whole art of painting (sculpture alone not being sufficient) and that too to some degree of eminence, in order to enable any one to pursue the chain of this enquiry though all its parts.<sup>24</sup>

This argument seems like a radical extension of Richardson's claim, shifting from the contention that artists should be recognised as having the same capacity as any other social group, be they connoisseurs or philosophers, to act as arbiters of taste to the claim that they should be the *only* arbiters of taste. Of course, if that really was what Hogarth meant, then he was advocating the same elitism of taste as set forth by Shaftesbury and merely arguing for it to be practised by a different social group.<sup>25</sup>

However, Hogarth did qualify this statement in the introduction to his treatise. Ronald Paulson's exegesis of the *Analysis* is that it was "not a project to cultivate or refine taste but specifically to democratise it."<sup>26</sup> Indeed Hogarth concurred with Richardson here in subscribing to the Lockean theory of the empirical origins of knowledge, and reassured his readers that "they [were] in a much fairer way, ladies, as well as gentlemen, of gaining a perfect knowledge of the elegant and beautiful in artificial, as well as natural forms, by considering them in a systematic[sic], but at the same time familiar way".<sup>27</sup> In other words, any individual could potentially call themselves a person of good taste, provided that they exercised reason and good sense. Within this rubric artists occupied the same status as all other people, as Hogarth made clear:

The more prevailing notion may be, that painters and connoisseurs are the only competent judges of this sort; the more it becomes necessary to clear up and confirm, as much as possible, what has only been asserted in the foregoing paragraph: that no one may be deterred, by the want of such previous knowledge, from entring[sic] into this enquiry.<sup>28</sup>

This makes much more sense in the context of Hogarth's position regarding European academical traditions, and specifically the mission statement which emphasised

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<sup>24</sup>William Hogarth, *Analysis of Beauty* (London, 1753), pp. iii-iv.

<sup>25</sup>Hogarth certainly made it abundantly clear in his visual output that he had no high opinion of elite taste as embodied by aristocrats; see note 30.

<sup>26</sup>Paulson, 1993, p. 121. Surely Hogarth's use of the phrase 'to fix the fluctuating ideas on Taste' and the long exposition of his innovative 'line of beauty' contradicts Paulson's thesis, however; Hogarth was still setting out his own standard of beauty even if, being rooted in the everyday, it was one more accessible to non-connoisseurs.

<sup>27</sup>Hogarth, 1753, p. 3.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*

the democratic nature of the drawing academy he had himself established in 1735.<sup>29</sup>

The ultimate aim of Richardson and Hogarth was the same - both wished to improve both the quality and the appreciation of the native English school of painting and, furthermore, both believed that artists should be the primary agents in effecting this improvement. Their opinions diverged, however, when it came to *how* to achieve the amelioration of their profession. Hogarth publicly denounced those connoisseurs who, in their fixation with Italy and the classical past, disregarded national interests in both their consumptive habits and expressed opinions.<sup>30</sup> In contrast, Richardson subscribed to the dominant ideology regarding both the idealisation of nature and the hierarchy of painting genres (although he did, admittedly, argue for portraiture to be considered a form of history painting), and therefore saw the consumption of Italian history painting by connoisseurs as a vital element in the endeavour to improve native painting.

For this study, one of the most interesting aspects of Hogarth's publishing of the *Analysis* was the treatise's negative reception by a faction of Hogarth's fellow-artists, with Paul Sandby's eight satirical etchings being the best-known manifestation of this. Sandby sought to discredit Hogarth on a multiplicity of levels, including through accusations of plagiarism and hubris. The use of the word 'faction' above was intentional, for Sandby's attack was motivated by cultural politics.<sup>31</sup> Sandby was not denying artists' (in general) need for a platform but, rather, took issue with Hogarth, who fundamentally disagreed with the idea that this platform should be an academy in the European tradition. Arguably more interesting, however, was Allan Ramsay's critique of Hogarth's *Analysis*, and particularly so given the close professional and personal relationship between the two.<sup>32</sup> Ramsay, along with many

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<sup>29</sup> "I proposed that every member should contribute an equal sum to the establishment, and have an equal right to vote in every question relative to the society. As to electing Presidents, Directors, Professors etc., I considered it was a ridiculous imitation of the foolish parade of the French academy". (Quoted in Brewer, 1997, p. 213).

<sup>30</sup> Hogarth had form in attacking the connoisseur, whom he characterised as ignorant, gullible and above all superficial (meaning that they were interested more in ensuring the public perception that they had fashionable taste rather than actually cultivating good taste). Furthermore, as Paulson analysed, Hogarth's satirical etchings on the subject "revealed beneath the supposed disinterest and benevolence of the Shaftesburian man of taste (the connoisseur and collector) a subtext of ownership, control, and desire." William Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty*, ed. Ronald Paulson (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997) p. xxiv. See the 1737 essay signed 'Britophil' and the etching entitled *Battle of the Pictures* (1745). See also Harry Mount, 'The Monkey with the Magnifying Glass: Constructions of the Connoisseur in Eighteenth-Century Britain', *Oxford Art Journal*, 29 (2006) pp. 167-184 for a useful précis of both general eighteenth-century attitudes towards connoisseurs (and specifically that of Hogarth), and a detailed interpretation of Hogarth's engraved 'Tailpiece' for the Society of Artist's 1761 exhibition catalogue.

<sup>31</sup> The exhibition catalogue *Hogarth and his Times* analyses each of Sandby's engravings. David Bindman, *Hogarth and his Times: a Serious Comedy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997) pp. 168-181.

<sup>32</sup> Ramsay published *Dialogue on Taste* in 1755. Despite Ramsey's condemnation of his attempt

others, took issue with Hogarth's concept of the universal 'line of beauty' but also, more interestingly, with his usage of the word 'taste'. Ramsay's point was a semantic one, and he sought to disentangle the word 'judgement' from that of 'taste': "whatever has a rule or standard to which it may be referred, and is capable of comparison, is not the object of taste, but of reason and judgement." Painting being an imitative art, and therefore capable of comparison, was an object of judgement, something every individual was capable of.<sup>33</sup> Ramsay's treatise thus made no claims for the artist having any special ability to make better aesthetic judgements above others.<sup>34</sup>

Another contemporaneous and extremely influential essay further obfuscated the role of artists in the debate concerning authority of taste. *Of the Standard of Taste*, published by David Hume in 1757, argued against Ramsay's suggestion of cultural democracy: "the taste of all individuals is not upon equal footing ... some men in general, however difficult to be particularly pitched upon, will be acknowledged by universal sentiment to have a preference above others."<sup>35</sup> Indeed, Hume proffered a highly elitist model predicated on the existence of "true judges" from whose superior judgements could be extrapolated a standard with which to arbitrate inconsistencies of taste, the concern presented at the beginning of the essay. After a long exposition devoted to identifying all aspects of this problem and demonstrating that some tastes were superior to others, Hume set out the criteria necessary for being a true judge as follows:

Strong sense, united to delicate sentiment, improved by practice, perfected by comparison, and cleared of all prejudice, can alone entitle critics to this valuable character: and the joint verdict of such, wherever they are to be found, is the true standard of taste and beauty.<sup>36</sup>

This passage has received a great deal of attention in analyses of Hume's essay, but a point which does not seem to have been raised in the literature is that the characteristics Hume describes are undoubtedly based on his own; his privileged background meant that the young Hume was able to attend Edinburgh University and devote

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to fix an ideal standard of beauty, Hogarth gave a copy of Ramsay's treatise to subscribers of the *Analysis* for free.

<sup>33</sup>Ramsay's explicit inclusion of women in the dialogue, both as characters and as vehicles for demonstrating the democratic nature of judgement, is noteworthy.

<sup>34</sup>There seems to be an implication, however, in Ramsay's characterisation of his two main protagonists that some were less capable of distinguishing taste from judgement.

<sup>35</sup>David Hume, 'Essay XXIII: The Standard of Taste', in *Essays Moral Political and Literary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963) p. 177. Much has been written on Hume's contribution to the development of aesthetics. As the title of the article suggests, James Hoxton focuses specifically on Hume's conceptualisation of the "true judges": James Hoxton, 'Hume's Opinion of Critics', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art History*, 20 (1961) pp. 157-162. A more recent assessment of Hume's essay as a whole is found in Theodore Gracyk, 'Rethinking Hume's Standard of Taste', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 52 (1994), pp. 169-182.

<sup>36</sup>Hume, 'Essay XXIII: The Standard of Taste', 1963, p. 177.

himself to refining his intellect and taste. Hume's conceptualisation of the "true judges" thus appears to be a self-referential argument for preserving exclusivity. As Hume also contended, this subsection of mankind was scarcely populated, and it was presumably his intention to keep it that way: "few are qualified to give judgement on any work of art, or establish their own sentiment as the standard of beauty."<sup>37</sup>

On almost every count, the contemporary artists of Hume's day were excluded from being arbiters of taste according to his definition. Of particular pertinence are his last three requirements. The necessary ability to be able to make comparative judgements was restricted for artists - as has already been noted, British artists of the early and mid eighteenth century faced innumerable obstacles in gaining adequate first-hand knowledge of visual art, as lack of status frequently precluded admission to the great private art collections of the country. Admittedly, the 1750s represent the beginning of a combating of this issue. Joshua Reynolds and Richard Wilson spent the early years of the decade in Italy gaining and improving their familiarity with the Old Masters, and their example was increasingly followed by later artists. However, the level of exposure to, and leisure to peruse, paintings in Britain by Raphael and the Carracci, for example, was still very much contingent on social status, a fact that Hume was more than aware of. Perhaps even more problematic, though, is the last criterion Hume deemed necessary for a person to be a "true judge": the state of being free of prejudice or bias. This, Hume explained, required the critic to "preserve his mind free from all *prejudice*, and allow nothing to enter into his consideration, but the very object which is submitted to his examination."<sup>38</sup> Prejudice, as Hume saw it, could arise from a number of sources, including the specific personal situation of the critic - "when any work is addressed to the public, though I should have a friendship or enmity with the author, I must depart from this situation and, considering myself as a man in general, forget, if possible, my individual being, and my peculiar circumstances."<sup>39</sup> This particular requirement surely has to be the most difficult to fulfil, and given his earlier remarks concerning the scarcity of "true judges" in whom all of his criteria were united, Hume evidently recognised this. It follows that personal acquaintance with the author whose creation one is assessing naturally engenders an additional level or layer of prejudice which one must disassociate themselves from. Did Hume here mean to suggest, then, that Shakespeare, potentially, would be highly likely to be an unreliable judge of the writings of Ben Johnson? Was Joshua Reynolds's assessment of Gainsborough's work in the fourteenth discourse possibly less accurate than that of another contemporary who did not know Gainsborough personally? The potent combination

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 176.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 174.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 175.



of personal acquaintance (a likelihood heightened by working in the same field) and natural professional bias necessarily implies that Hume believed that, as states of being, an artist and a “true judge” were, in the vast majority of cases, mutually exclusive.

Eighteenth-century theories of taste which explicitly or implicitly excluded artists from the role of arbiters faced their most serious challenge in the person of Joshua Reynolds:

[His] observations on all subjects of criticism and taste are so ingenious and just, that posterity may be at a loss to determine, whether his consummate skill and execution in his own art, or his judgement in that and other kindred arts, were superior.<sup>40</sup>

The above assessment of Reynolds’s critical abilities was made during the artist’s lifetime by his close friend the Shakespearian scholar Edward Malone, and included by James Northcote in his hagiographical biography of Reynolds, but the monumentality of Reynolds in the context of late-eighteenth-century British culture should not be underestimated. His numerous titles and accomplishments - first-elected President of the Royal Academy, the honorary doctorate from Oxford, his knighthood, important member of the Johnsonian circle - attest to his transcendence of the conventional social barriers that had hitherto so frequently circumscribed artists. An early indication of Reynolds’s privileged reputation for judgement is his inclusion in the third edition (1766) of Samuel Johnson’s famous dictionary, which was the first English-language dictionary to employ quotations from noted writers in order to substantiate its definitions. Johnson worked on the premise that great language should be used as a model, and his choice of quoted authors formed an authoritative canon of significant literature. Reynolds’s usage of the word taste (“however contradictory it may be in geometry, it is true in *taste*, that many little things will not make a great one”) was thus placed alongside examples from the works of Pope, Milton, Dryden and Swift.<sup>41</sup>

David Solkin suggests that Reynolds set out the position that he and artist contemporaries were loath to “surrender [their] authority on matters of taste to the large and relatively uninformed art public” as early as 1759 in his three essays for *The Idler* - only two years after Hume’s defining of the “true judges”.<sup>42</sup> As has been noted by the plethora of socio-historic studies of Reynolds’s career, 1759 was a

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<sup>40</sup>James Northcote, *The Life of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, 2nd. ed., vol. I (London, 1819) p. 146.

<sup>41</sup>Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, vol. II (London, 1766) p. 814.

<sup>42</sup>David Solkin, *Painting for Money: The Visual Arts and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven and London Yale University Press, 1993) p. 254.

pivotal year in which the artist raised his portrait prices to unprecedented levels.<sup>43</sup> He could do so because he was patronised by the cream of society and, in order to satisfy them, had evolved a form of portraiture that had a strong allegiance to the ‘grand manner’ advocated by continental painting academies in the eighteenth century. The idealisation integral to this style, along with historical or classical allusion, made for an extremely flattering form of representation. Reynolds had to operate within the tastes of his aristocratic patrons in order to secure commissions - and was evidently very successful in doing so - and naturally would have imbibed their preoccupations, concerns and preferences. Did Reynolds’s position as an arbiter of taste therefore only gain authority because it was a reflection, and validation, of the standard of taste exhibited by the connoisseurs? William Blake certainly thought so; in the now infamous annotations in his copy of Reynolds’s *Discourses* he scathingly suggested that:

Reynolds’s Opinion was that Genius may be Taught and that all Pretence to Inspiration is a Lie and a Deceit ... The Enquiry in England is not whether a Man has Talents and Genius, But whether he is Passive and Polite and A virtuous Ass and obedient to Noblemen’s Opinions in Art and Science.<sup>44</sup>

The accuracy of Blake’s characterisation of Reynolds notwithstanding, it is undeniable that, in becoming the first president of the Royal Academy of Arts, Reynolds also undertook the role of first public orator concerning the visual arts. Reynolds delivered fifteen discourses which spanned the majority of his presidency (1769-1790). The importance of these in the context of the cultural politics of the era was recognised by the publication of the first seven lectures as a volume in 1778, and Reynolds reinforced this notion in the dedication addressed to the Royal Academicians which prefaced the first discourse:

Gentlemen, That you have ordered the publication of this discourse, is not only very flattering to me, as it implies your approbation of the method of study which I have recommended; but likewise, as this method receives from that act such an additional weight and authority, as demands from the Student that deference and respect, which can be due only to the united sense of so considerable a Body of Artists.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>43</sup>See, for example, Waterhouse, 1994, p. 221. The price increase was reported in a letter written by Samuel Johnson, and is transcribed in James Boswell’s *Life* of the writer.

<sup>44</sup>Quoted by Robert Uphaus, ‘The Ideology of Reynolds’ Discourses on Art’, *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 12 (1978) pp. 59-73.

<sup>45</sup>Joshua Reynolds, *Seven Discourses delivered in the Royal Academy by the President* (London, 1778) pp. iii-iv.

Reynolds's discourses, initially aimed at the students of the academy schools but with widening themes in correlation with the widening of his audience, were formulated to achieve three objectives: to establish a programme of study for aspiring artists; to cement the status of painting as a liberal art, rather than a mechanical one; and to condition public taste, thereby raising the status of native painters. In the *Discourses*, Reynolds detailed painters and schools who were approved for study, such as Raphael and Michelangelo, and those to be avoided, such as Bernini and most of the Dutch School, thus revealing his ambition as to the latter of his three objectives outlined above. The salient point is that Reynolds's list of suitable artists for emulation was, by and large, the list of the early- to mid-eighteenth-century connoisseur and art patron; unlike Hogarth, he did not advocate breaking away from established canons of taste. Indeed, in his orations and published writings Reynolds was conspicuously silent on the topic of early Italian art. Only Masaccio received any degree of discussion, and the small degree of praise given him was tempered with censure for his "dry and hard" manner.<sup>46</sup>

Towards the end of his life, Reynolds reflected that "as for the authority of my opinion, I shall affect no modesty[:]; it may be said [that it] has been the business of my life, and I have had great opportunities".<sup>47</sup> An anecdote related by Northcote illustrates the degree to which Reynolds's lectures were considered authoritative enough to warrant attending by the aristocracy: "when he delivered his discourse, and when the audience was, as usual, numerous, and composed principally of the learned and the great, the Earl of C— came up to him".<sup>48</sup> Reynolds did not realise Hogarth's ambition of fully wresting control of the establishment of rules of taste from the connoisseurs, and indeed his own theories of the "politics and power" of taste as elucidated in the *Discourses* perpetuated the elitism of Shaftesbury and Hume.<sup>49</sup> The fact that Reynolds had achieved what had been unattainable for earlier British artists - the status of an arbiter of taste - did not necessarily mean that he believed all artists shared that right or privilege.<sup>50</sup> However, arguably a more important consequence of Reynolds's ascendancy was the change in public (aristo-

<sup>46</sup>See Chapter 6 for more on Reynolds's evaluation of Masaccio in the twelfth discourse.

<sup>47</sup>Quoted by Richard Wendorf, *Joshua Reynolds: The Painter in Society* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996) p. 183.

<sup>48</sup>Northcote, 1819, p. 87

<sup>49</sup>*The Shock of the Real: Romanticism and Visual Culture, 1760-1860* analyses Reynolds dependence on and argument for class distinctions in taste. Gillen d'Arcy-Wood, *The Shock of the Real: Romanticism and Visual Culture, 1760-1860* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001) p. 81.

<sup>50</sup>See, for example, the section in the fourth discourse that, whilst affirming the dignity of the accomplished artist, seems to infer that the terms 'artist' and 'arbiter of art' are not interchangeable: "Like a sovereign judge and arbiter of art he is possessed of that presiding power which separates and attracts every excellence from every school; selects both from what is great and what is little, brings home knowledge from the east and from the west; making the universe tributary towards furnishing his mind and enriching his works with originality and variety of invention."

cratic) perception it engendered. Modern artists could no longer be dismissed as mere tools, sufficient only to record on canvas the elevated thoughts of their superior patrons. The judgement and taste displayed by artists increased in worth exponentially in the last years of the eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth to the extent that it became a valuable commodity. As William Buchanan, the picture dealer, remarked in the early nineteenth century: “Only Sir George Beaumont [himself an artist] bought entirely on his own initiative. The others [meaning collectors and connoisseurs] relied on advice - advice that came from the artists.”<sup>51</sup>

If Reynolds marks a significant turning point in the debate over the “politics and power” of taste and his discourses represent the occupation of critical authority by artists, it is fascinating to note that some artists continued into the nineteenth century to follow Reynolds’s lead and ape the elitist ideologies of those who had previously been their antagonists. The rapid expansion of the market for fine art and its concomitant increasing commercialisation led artists such as Edward Poynter to, in 1885, bemoan the patronage of modern art having transcended the “circle of ... cultivated people”.<sup>52</sup> James McNeill Whistler’s Ten O’Clock Lecture and other writings continued the debate. By the beginning of the twentieth century, Walter Sickert was espousing a Hogarthian position. Through mobilising an analogy between art criticism and language, Sickert argued that only those who ‘learnt’ and ‘spoke’ the language of art - i.e. artists - were qualified to judge it.<sup>53</sup>

As already intimated in relation to Reynolds, it is important to note the parameters that generally circumscribed artists’ pontificating on the merits of painters and paintings in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as a coda to this discussion. Expressions of taste carried complex and multiple meanings, contextualised by a variety of socio-politico-historical factors, and value judgements deviating from orthodox aesthetic preferences were not generally welcomed. To express admiration for the art of the primitives, much of which was religious in form and function and therefore difficult to divorce - in the minds of many British Protestants - from its fundamental Catholic context, was to make oneself vulnerable to accusations of Popery.<sup>54</sup> Indeed, in 1905 Roger Fry argued that the disparity between the absence

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<sup>51</sup>Quoted in Haskell, 1976, p. 50.

<sup>52</sup>Quoted in Colin Trodd, ‘The Authority of Art: Cultural criticism and the idea of the Royal Academy in mid-Victorian Britain’, *Art History*, 20 (1997) pp. 3-22.

<sup>53</sup>See, for example, Sickert’s article on the Royal Academy exhibition 1912 in the *English Review*. Walter Sickert, *Walter Sickert: The Complete Writings on Art*, ed. by Anna Gruetzner Reynolds (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) pp. 315-321.

<sup>54</sup>The strength of anti-Catholic sentiment and belief is evidenced by strategies brought to bear on the interpretation of recent historical events, such as in the case of the British defeat in the American war of Independence where commentators suggested that it was divine retribution for the British deviating from their ‘mission’ to eradicate Catholicism and instead being at war with

of mention of early art in the *Discourses* and Reynolds's own collection which, as had been demonstrated, encompassed paintings, prints and drawings by or after primitives, could likely be attributed to deliberate self-censorship so as to avoid disconcerting or alienating his audience.<sup>55</sup> Discussions of early Italian art were thus often caveated in some manner, and it is significant that Benjamin Haydon's frame of reference in his expression of appreciation for a fresco fragment which was, in the period under discussion, considered to be by Giotto was the carved reliefs of the Elgin marbles, imported into Britain in the early nineteenth century. Haydon remarked on the

... exact resemblance [that a head by Giotto in the fresco] bore to the heads of the Panathenaic procession as if (and it is certainly evident from this) he had been instructed by the poor Grecian Artists who fled to Italy during the invasion of their country and carried with them what they had seen in Athens - To Nature and to Greece if you want evidence, can you only recur to with any prospect of information. <sup>56</sup>

In the later reworking of his diary entries as his autobiography, Haydon also claimed that "the head bore all the characters of the heads of the youths on horseback in the Elgin Marbles."<sup>57</sup> Haydon's highlighting of the sculptural nature of Giotto's forms and their outlines resonates with the influence of Neo-Classicism, and Chapter 7 of this thesis will demonstrate the liminal nature of the border between the works of the primitives and Neo-Classicism.

The two chapters forming Part II of this thesis will further interrogate the complexities of British artists evincing an interest in early Italian art which ran counter to the prevailing aesthetic taste. As will be demonstrated, both Thomas Patch and the Callcotts felt it necessary to offer rationales for their focusing on and publicising of paintings and sculpture by Italian primitives.

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fellow Protestants. See Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992) for a magisterial survey of the issues surrounding the causes for and results of eighteenth-century events relating to Britain's understanding of itself as a nation.

<sup>55</sup> Joshua Reynolds, *Discourses, with Introduction and Notes by R. Fry*, ed. by Roger Fry (London, 1905) pp. xi-xii.

<sup>56</sup> Benjamin Robert Haydon, *The Diary of Benjamin Robert Haydon*, ed. Willard Bissard Pope, vol. I. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960-63) p. 166.

<sup>57</sup> Benjamin Robert Haydon, *Life of Benjamin Robert Haydon*, ed. by Tom Taylor, vol. 1 (London, 1853) p. 148. Haydon began compiling this text in 1839. The only fresco fragment depicting a single head in Britain attributed to Giotto at the time of Haydon's original diary entry - 1810 - was that of a bust of a young woman, now in the Boymans-van Beuningen Museum. Chapter 6 elucidates the dissemination of this fresco fragment and its companions in both print and material form in Britain from 1770 onwards.

## Part II: Scholarly Responses

## Chapter 6

# “After all I believe I am the first that has ever given any Prints to the publick after this Author”: Thomas Patch’s Pioneering Publications after the Italian Primitives in the 1770s.

Between 1770 and 1775 the English artist Thomas Patch (Fig. 24) publicly issued a series of engravings, both singly and in volumes, after fourteenth- and fifteenth-century works of art which emphatically did not fall within the parameters of the standard canon of taste formulated and propagated by European connoisseurs, collectors and critics. The dissemination and survival of a notable corpus of these engravings has served to ensure the inclusion of Patch’s name in almost all accounts of the rediscovery of interest in the Italian primitives, but whilst eminent scholars such as Francis Haskell, Christopher Lloyd, Tanya Leger, Robert Rosenblum and Hugh Brigstocke have referenced Patch as a suitable marker for the beginnings of an interest in the primitives, these references have in common their brevity, and in some instances constitute mere footnotes.<sup>1</sup> Only extremely recently has there appeared what is a significant contribution to the almost non-existent literature on

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<sup>1</sup>Lloyd and Leger, 1975, pp. 56-58; Haskell, 1976, p. 51; Robert Rosenblum, *Transformations in Late Eighteenth-Century Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967) p. 165 and fn. 59.

Patch's publications after the primitives, an article by Sam Smiles in the *British Art Journal*; prior to this, the only in-depth study of Patch's volumes was one published almost forty years ago by Edward Maser.<sup>2</sup>

The above-named scholars would undoubtedly take exception to the suggestion that Patch needs rehabilitating or reinserting into the narrative of the rediscovery of the primitives. However, his position in that narrative has often been glossed over or rendered opaque, a state of affairs which is primarily due to the lamentable fact that comparatively very little documentary material anchors Patch to historical recollection. To a greater extent than the other artists under discussion in this thesis there is almost no evidence on which to define the dialectic between Patch's engravings and their context. Indeed the "minute particulars" of Patch's life and career have been very little augmented since the research of F.J.B. Watson, published in 1939, established the known parameters of the information on the artist.<sup>3</sup> This chapter, after a brief sketch of Patch's biography which will speculate about the genus of his interest in early Italian art, will foreground Patch's publications themselves, examining their content, context, afterlives and influence. Additionally, a parallel avenue of investigation will be based on hitherto unpublished material of relevance to the artist's demonstrable engagement with the Italian primitives. In collating and analysing this contextual material alongside Patch's artistic productions, it is hoped that this chapter will contribute a more holistic but also rigorously-interrogated account of Patch's achievements regarding the rediscovery of the primitives.

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<sup>2</sup>Sam Smiles, 'Thomas Patch (1725-1782) and early Italian art', *The British Art Journal*, 14 (2013), pp. 50-58 and Edward A. Maser, 'Giotto, Masaccio, Ghiberti and Thomas Patch' in Wolfgang Hartmann, ed., *Festschrift für Klaus Lankheit* (Köln: DuMont Schauberg, 1973) pp. 192-199. Smiles's article shares the aim of this chapter and an also very recent publication by this author (Carly Collier, 'From "Gothic atrocities" to Objects of Aesthetic Appreciation: The Transition from Marginal to Mainstream of Early Italian Art in British Taste during the Long Eighteenth Century.' in Frank O'Gorman and Lia Guerra (eds.), *The Centre and the Margins in Eighteenth-Century British and Italian Cultures* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013)), which is to redress the general dismissal of Patch's art-historical works. Professor Smiles generously shared his paper and discussed his research on Patch from the inception of this thesis, offering advice on the subject of tracing the interest in the primitives in eighteenth-century Britain.

<sup>3</sup>Francis J.B. Watson, "Thomas Patch (1725-1782). Notes on His Life Together with a Catalogue of His Known Works", *Journal of the Walpole Society*, 28 (1939-40), pp. 15-50. Additional scholarship on Patch (not focusing on his publications after the primitives) includes Francis J.B. Watson, "Thomas Patch: Some New Light on His Work", *Apollo*, 85 (1967) pp. 348-54; Francis Russell, "Thomas Patch, Sir William Lowther and the Holker Claude", *Apollo*, 162 (1975) pp. 115-119; Ulrich Middeldorf, "Due inediti di Thomas Patch", *RILA*, 15 (1989); and, recently, Hugh Belsey, "Reading the Caricature Groups of Thomas Patch", *Burlington Magazine*, 153 (2011), pp. 229-31. Fabia Borroni Salvadori, "Il caricaturista Thomas Patch alla Biblioteca Nazionale di Firenze", *Almanacco dei Bibliotecari Italiani*, (1973), pp. 159-172 offers a more detailed analysis of Patch's position in the Florentine artistic milieu.



## The Life of Patch.

The name of Thomas Patch, who was born into an eminent Devonshire medical family in 1725, does not feature strongly in accounts of the eighteenth-century British school.<sup>4</sup> This is primarily because he spent almost the entirety of his artistic career in Italy, after making his way there in 1747 with Richard Dalton, an artist and art dealer who was later appointed librarian to George III. What little information exists regarding Patch's early life can be attributed to two sources: the recording by the diarist Joseph Farington of conversations he had with one of Patch's nephews in the early 1800s, and the correspondence between the connoisseur Horace Walpole and his distant relation Sir Horace Mann, the English Envoy to Florence, which has long been deployed by scholars for its detailed explication of the social, political and cultural events, concerns and interests of the second half of eighteenth-century England, Europe and America. Mann can be regarded as the more reliable source; Patch's relationship with his family was, by multiple accounts, not a close one - and indeed he never returned to England - whereas Horace Mann lived opposite and patronised Patch in Florence for approximately thirty years.<sup>5</sup> Thus a more specialised benefit of the extensive series of letters between Walpole and Mann is that it contains a contemporary account of the life and career of Patch. Mann, in fact, gives us the first salient artistic fact of Patch's life - that he "lived some time" with the surgeon and collector Richard Mead (1673-1754) in London.<sup>6</sup> This reference is tantalisingly brief and unsubstantiated by corresponding references or documentation.<sup>7</sup> The impetus for this relationship would have been the medical background of Patch's family and concomitant desire that Patch himself receive training in medicine. However, Watson located Patch's transition from science to art as a direct consequence of his exposure to the cultural environment engendered by Mead. Certainly the breadth and quality of Mead's collection of books, prints, paintings and antique sculpture meant that the young Patch would have enjoyed all the advantages that the patronage of perhaps the most active virtuoso of the first half of the eighteenth century naturally lent, reaping the benefit of being "sur-

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<sup>4</sup>Patch, for example, is not included in the major late-nineteenth and twentieth-century surveys of the British school, such as Richard Redgrave and Samuel Redgrave, *A Century of Painters of the English School* 2 vols., (London, 1866) and Waterhouse, 1953.

<sup>5</sup>Patch's father, John Patch (1691-1743) was a surgeon for the Old Pretender in Paris and at the Exeter Hospital. Two of his sons, John and James, followed him into the medical profession. Portraits of both John Patch Senior and Junior hang in the collection of the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital, by William Gandy and John Opie respectively.

<sup>6</sup>Mann to Walpole, 22 February 1771, in Wilmarth S. Lewis, ed., *Horace Walpole's Correspondence: Sir Horace Mann, VII, 12 March 1768-1 May 1774*, vol. 23 (New Haven: Yale University Press; London: Oxford University Press, 1967) p. 275.

<sup>7</sup>Although little material survives connecting Mead with those students, artists, and scholars referred to by his biographer as being directly in his employ, it is, of course, perfectly plausible that Patch fabricated this connection in order to give the impression of having had a superior artistic education, or to cultivate a reputation for connoisseurship.

rounded with objects capable of instructing him, or exciting his emulation.”<sup>8</sup>

Patch’s second formative artistic encounter may well have been with his fellow young Devonian Joshua Reynolds. It is significant that Patch and Reynolds had more than just their native county in common; Reynolds also contemplated a career in medicine as a youth but, it would seem, came to painting earlier than Patch, having been apprenticed to the London portrait painter Thomas Hudson in 1740.<sup>9</sup> It is surely plausible that he and Patch, both young students of art, may have become acquainted during this period either through the auspices of Mead or at the fledgling St. Martin’s Lane Academy. Presupposing an existing relationship between Reynolds and Patch has further resonance when one considers that they shared rooms in Rome in 1751-1752 and that Patch was included in Reynolds’s caricature of Raphael’s *School of Athens* of the same year (Fig. 25).<sup>10</sup> Scholars have speculated that Reynolds - Patch’s senior by two years - may have been responsible for introducing Patch to caricature during this period, although the artist’s nephew related an anecdote to Farington which demonstrates that Patch had previous form in the genre.<sup>11</sup> With regard to an interest in early Italian art, there are multiple links between Reynolds and Patch, many of which will be explicated later in this chapter. By means of introduction, however, it is notable that in 1752, after leaving Rome (and therefore Patch) behind, Reynolds’s sketchbook for this period evidences an interest in artworks of the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.<sup>12</sup> In Florence he first referenced Cimabue in relation to Santa Maria

<sup>8</sup>Matthew Maty, *Authentic Memoirs of the Life of Richard Mead, M.D.* (London, 1755) p. 58. For Mead, see the chapter on him in Craig Hanson’s excellent examination of the intersections between medicine, science, art and antiquarianism during the long eighteenth century: Hanson, 2009, pp. 157-193.

<sup>9</sup>Reynolds trained with Hudson (1701-1779) between 1740 and 1743.

<sup>10</sup>Ingamells, ed., 1997, pp. 745-746, which cites the *Stati delle Anime* for that year for the district of S. Andrea delle Fratte in the Archivio del Vicariato, S. Giovanni in Laterano, Rome. Patch has traditionally been identified as the figure in the top right-hand corner with a portfolio under his arm. Caricatures by Reynolds are rare; the setting of this, within ‘barbarous’ Gothic rather than harmonious classical architecture, reinforces the Britishness of the figures whom Reynolds has facetiously transposed in place of Raphael’s philosophers. This caricature is best understood in tandem with Reynolds’s *Idler* essays, referenced in Chapter 5, which expressed exasperation at those so-called connoisseurs who, in Reynolds’s opinion, falsely claimed a high level of knowledge and understanding of art.

<sup>11</sup>See, for example, Ilaria Bignamini and Andrew Wilton, *Grand Tour: The Lure of Italy in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Tate Publishing, 1996) p. 83, and Hugh Belsey, ‘Patch, Thomas (bap. 1725, d. 1782)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/21521>, accessed 10 Feb 2012]. “I dined with the Revd. Mr Patch and met Leekie there. We had a conversation about art ... The father of Mr Patch, our Host, was a very eminent Surgeon in Exeter ... Mr Patch, the painter, who resided with the late Sir Horace Mann, in Florence, was his brother, and had been in his youth apprentice to an apothecary in Exeter, and at that time gave offence by drawing caricatures of persons.” Entry dated Thursday 15th November 1810, *The Diary of Joseph Farington*, ed. by Kenneth Garlick and Angus MacIntyre, vol. 10 (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982) pp. 3798-3799.

<sup>12</sup>Joshua Reynolds, ‘Italian sketchbook’, BMPL 1859,0514.305.

Novella, and then copied a figure from “an old picture before Raffaello” in Santa Maria del Carmine, the same church which later became a locus for Patch’s scholarly endeavours (Fig. 26).<sup>13</sup> Moreover, this sketch is preceded in Reynolds’s sketchbook by a reference to the artist and early collector of Italian primitives Ignazio Hugford (1702/3-1778).<sup>14</sup> Hugford was a prominent figure of the Florentine artistic circle and known for his substantial art collection, which exhibition and sales records have demonstrated contained a large number of primitives.<sup>15</sup> Giovanna Perini hypothesised that Hugford may have catalysed Reynolds’s interest in early Italian art, and this thesis further proposes that, given the absence of evidence for Patch nurturing and developing an interest in the primitives whilst in Rome, Hugford (whom Patch was certainly acquainted with, as previously referenced) probably provided the impetus for both English artists to look at Trecento and Quattrocento art. The complexities of the relationship of influence and knowledge-transfer between Reynolds, Patch and Hugford in relation to the primitives warrants further interrogation both for what it may reveal about the inclinations of the individuals involved and for the trajectory of the rediscovery of the primitives in the mid eighteenth century.

The physical evidence of Patch’s time in Rome reflects his training under the landscape painter Joseph Vernet, attested to by a number of sources.<sup>16</sup> Patch’s seven years in Rome appear to have been markedly successful, given the surviving letters and banker’s drafts that record his patronage - as both an artist and a dealer - by a series of influential English connoisseurs. Given the focus of this chapter, the details of Patch’s activities in Rome require only a brief summary: he painted landscapes such as the views of Tivoli for Lord Charlemont, acted as dealer on such prestigious commissions as the Lowther Claudes, and was a central member of Charlemont’s short-lived academy for English artists.<sup>17</sup> His residence in the eternal city came to an abrupt end, however, when he was ordered out of the papal states within twenty-four hours for a significant misdemeanour which continues to elude exact definition. Despite the lack of recognition for Patch in England in the centuries following his death, his status at this time is evidenced by the collection of illustrious recommendations made on his behalf to Horace Mann (1706-1786), the English

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<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, f. 52r.

<sup>14</sup>Reynolds noted that Hugford had “a good collection of drawings, principally the Florentine Masters.” *Ibid.*, f. 14r.

<sup>15</sup>Fabia Borroni Salvadori’s research into the 1767 exhibition in Florence revealed that Hugford contributed 161 artworks, including a purported Masaccio, to it. Borroni Salvadori, 1974.

<sup>16</sup>Namely, Farington and Mann.

<sup>17</sup>For an account of Patch’s work for Sir William Lowther, see Russell, 1975, pp. 115-119. Corlette Rossiter Walker argued that Patch’s prominent positioning in Reynolds’s *School of Athens* was a visual representation of his centrality in the English circle of artists in Rome. Corlette Rossiter Walker, *The Anglo-American Artist in Italy, 1750-1820* exh. cat. (Santa Barbara: University Art Museum, 1982).

envoy to Florence who would become a close friend, neighbour and champion of the artist's. Patch's supporters at this time included Cardinal Albani, Piccolomini and Thomas Stevens, who later also recommended Patch to Lord Huntingdon. Under the protection of Horace Mann, Patch resumed his former occupations - view painting (Fig. 27) and art dealing for the English *milordi* - in Florence, and aggregated his income with extremely popular caricatures of his fellow countrymen (Fig. 28).<sup>18</sup> According to contemporary references, Mann kept a number of Patch's views on display at his house in Via Santo Spirito, which was the first port of call for the visiting English. It is perhaps surprising, therefore, that Mann does not mention Patch in his correspondence with Walpole until 1768, and then only obliquely.<sup>19</sup> One wonders if, perhaps, Mann's introduction of Patch at this point is an indicator of the temporal point at which Patch conceived his idea to publish engravings after early Italian art. Mann was certainly aware of Walpole's 'Gothic' activities in the arenas of collecting, building and literature through their correspondence, and indeed it is difficult to think of an alternative influential connoisseur who would have been so receptive to Patch's engravings, as this chapter will continue to explicate.

## Patch's engravings and the issue of his motivation.

As intimated above, Patch is known today primarily for his Florentine view paintings and caricatures of English *milordi* on the Grand Tour. He was also, however, responsible for what is believed to be the earliest published artistic responses to the early Italian masters in English and, perhaps, anywhere; Patch's works, written in both Italian and English, were published in Italy but simultaneously sold in England. However, Patch's engravings have sometimes been somewhat marginalised in historiographies of British taste for reasons which will be explored. This thesis contends that their scholarly nature, augmented by the introductions that preface each edition, necessitates a reassessment of their place in the rediscovery of the primitives, beginning with a discussion of Patch's motivation.

The series of volumes of engravings - comprising *La Vita di Masaccio* (Firenze, 1770); *La Vita di Fra Bartolommeo* (Firenze, 1772); *La Vita di Giotto* (Firenze, 1772) and *Porta del Battistero di San Giovanni di Firenze* (Firenze, 1775) - were originally conceived, in Patch's own words, as encompassing "every celebrated author [i.e. artist] in Tuscany".<sup>20</sup> Judging by this statement, therefore, it was not

<sup>18</sup>For Patch as a caricaturist, see Borroni Salvadori, 1973 and Belsey, 2011.

<sup>19</sup>"I send you a *caricatura* which wants no explanation as to the principal figure. The rest is too complicated to be explained. It was done here by an Englishman who has made most excellent caricatures of most of our countrymen who have passed by here, by their own desire and in societies." Mann to Walpole, 15 March 1768 in Lewis, ed., vol. 23, 1967, p. 5.

<sup>20</sup>Thomas Patch, *The Life of Masaccio: La Vita di Masaccio* (Firenze, 1772) p. 3. It must be

Patch's original intention to enlighten his audience, for whom he presupposed a certain degree of connoisseurship, to the artistic merits of specifically the Florentine primitives.<sup>21</sup> Sam Smiles reads Patch's statement as indicating that the series of engravings was conceived of as presenting something akin to an extra-illustrated version of Vasari's *Vite*, in response to the call made by the eighteenth-century scholar Giovanni Bottari (1689-1775) for visual evidence - in the form of engravings - to complement textual accounts of paintings by Italian artists from the early Renaissance onwards.<sup>22</sup> Bottari's argument was that visual evidence was necessary for a thorough understanding of the stylistic qualities of various masters, an undoubted acknowledgement of the misleading nature of Vasari's ekphrastic descriptions of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century artworks discussed in Chapter 2. Patch in fact continued the text of *La Vita di Giotto* by citing Bottari as having given him encouragement in his engraving project. Although no reference to Bottari was made in Patch's earliest volume, *La Vita di Masaccio*, Smiles's argument that Patch's initial ambition was to create what Smiles classed as a "visual data-bank" of copies after artists important in the story of the development of Italian Renaissance art still holds true, thanks to a letter written by Mann to Walpole early in 1771 that both makes this claim and intimates that Patch's activities were well under way.<sup>23</sup>

Smiles's insistence on Patch's scholarly motivation from the outset of the project runs counter to the opinion of Edward Maser, who conceptualised the series as follows:

In studying these books, moreover, one can perceive, gradually developing, an almost touching increase in the seriousness of the author's intent, moving from an almost frivolous approach prompted by his physiognomic interests, to a concern with what one can recognize as a scholarly study of an important artistic monument.<sup>24</sup>

Maser was certainly correct in citing Patch's interest in physiognomy as a likely catalyst for his first book of engravings after Masaccio, as will shortly be explored, but given the evidence of the volumes themselves one is inclined to side with Smiles against Maser's characterisation of Patch's enterprise as initially a 'frivolous' one, if for no other reason but the economic. Whilst lack of documentary evidence means

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noted that the copy cited here is that at the British Library which consists of the Masaccio, Fra Bartolommeo and Giotto volumes bound together. *La Vita di Masaccio* is given as the title for the whole due to it being the first in the folio. Subsequent references to *La Vita di Masaccio* and *La Vita di Giotto* will be to this bound volume and thus dated 1772.

<sup>21</sup>The first volume of engravings was addressed to "the lovers of the art of painting", who were "conversant with the Fine Arts." Patch, 1772, p. 1.

<sup>22</sup>Smiles, 2013, p. 52.

<sup>23</sup>Mann to Walpole, 20 February 1771 in Lewis, ed., vol. 23, 1967, pp. 260-262.

<sup>24</sup>Maser, 1979, p. 192.

that exactly quantifying Patch's financial circumstances is not possible, it seems safe to assume that what we do know about his behaviour in relation certain commissions - a document in the Archivio di Stato of Florence reports Patch having applied to the authorities to enforce payment for two paintings from Johann Zoffany, though Zoffany was merely the courier of the paintings rather than the patron - is indicative of an absence of significant wealth.<sup>25</sup> Thus if Patch's work was not being financed by a patron (and there is no evidence that it was), presumably an outlay of the kind required to publish forty volumes of engravings, each comprising between two and four pages of a textual introduction and between twelve and twenty-six plates, indicates a seriousness on the behalf of the author greater than that suggested by Maser. Similarly, it was to Patch's advantage that these volumes sold; to publish engravings after paintings which were not considered to illustrate ideal beauty was to target only a very niche market, necessitating a seriousness of purpose.

Thomas L. Pridham (1803-1873), author of the 1869 publication *Devonshire Celebrities*, also downplayed Patch's ambition. Pridham wrote in his entry on Patch (which, interestingly, focused exclusively on his engravings after the primitives) that the artist published the volumes for his "relations and friends".<sup>26</sup> Patch's social and professional network means that there are indeed copies of the volumes traceable back to the libraries of friends and relations, but more than one source attests to the fact that the engravings were a commercial enterprise, and thus it follows that they must have been intended for a wider, public audience.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, the employment of scholarly and historical apparatus by Patch from the very outset of his project is evident, as will be seen.

In fact, though, only four volumes of engravings by Patch are known. Maser posited the theory that Patch's publishing of copies after the works of Tuscan mas-

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<sup>25</sup>Quoted in Watson, 1939-1940, p. 46. The disconnect between Patch and the majority of his family has already been referenced, and thus he probably would not have been receiving financial assistance from them by the late 1760s. The date and cause of this familial rupture is unknown, but it seems likely that it may have occurred upon Patch's expulsion from Rome given that Farington notes having seen letters from the artist in the Patch family collection dating from his residence in Rome, and he is named as one of the executors of the will of his mother, Hannah Patch, which was proved on February 1st 1749 in the presence of his elder brother John Patch (PROB 11/777/8).

<sup>26</sup>Thomas L. Pridham, *Devonshire Celebrities* (London and Exeter, 1869) pp. 83-84. Pridham's entry on and knowledge of Patch can be explained (by his own admission) by his having married into the Patch family; he married a Caroline Chapman Patch, born in 1810 in Exeter, who was the sixth surviving daughter of James Patch of Topsham. *Gentleman's Magazine*, 164 (1863) p. 563. Pridham also gave a useful, if brief, list of the whereabouts of four of Patch's volumes which will be enumerated later in this chapter.

<sup>27</sup>Horace Mann's Letter-Book contains an entry dated February 25th 1771 for having sent Horace Walpole a bill for "two sets of the life of Masaccio" (S.P. 105/295 f.84), quoted in Lewis, ed., vol. 23, p. 273 for example, and a notice in the *Gazzetta Toscana* of September 1773 relates that the *Porta del Battistero...* was offered to members of the Academy for 12 paoli. *Gazzetta Toscana*, 38 (Sept. 1773) p. 150.

ters ceased abruptly due to the unexpected deaths of both Giovanni Gaetano Bottari (whom Maser described as Patch's patron, though on the basis of no evidence beyond Patch's referencing him as a source of encouragement in the Giotto volume) and his friend Raimondo Cocchi, Ducal Antiquarian and Director of the Uffizi in 1775, although there is no documentary evidence to support or further elucidate this idea.<sup>28</sup> Perhaps more prosaically, however, the financial returns did not support or warrant the continuation of the project: an advertisement in *The Times* of November 1791 for the forthcoming sale of the effects of the recently-deceased James Patch, Patch's younger brother and the London vendor of his engravings, mentions "fine Italian prints, after the Works of Bartolommeo, Masaccio, and Giotto", suggesting that James Patch was unable to shift all of his copies of his brother's work.<sup>29</sup> Documentary evidence further illuminates the various motivations behind Patch's limited selection of artists to publish copies after, and this chapter will continue by considering these - alongside the content and scholarship - of the three individual volumes. The publication relating to Fra Bartolommeo will be largely ignored, as that artist was a contemporary of Raphael's and therefore publishing copies after his paintings conformed much more to contemporary standards of taste. Further, epistolary evidence attests to the fact that Patch produced the Fra Bartolomeo volume at the request of Horace Walpole and not on his own initiative, which was the case, as far as is known, with the three other books of engravings.

### ***La Vita di Masaccio.***

*La Vita di Masaccio* comprises twenty-six line-engraved plates prefaced by a titlepage and four pages of text. The engravings are copies of individual heads (twenty-two plates) and figural groups (two plates) from the lower tier of frescoes in the Brancacci chapel of Santa Maria del Carmine, and each plate is signed "Masaccio pinxit, T Patch 1770." The volume is dedicated to Horace Mann (Fig. 29) who, as Brian Moloney demonstrated, belonged to none of the intellectual academies of Florence during his long residency in the city but accepted the dedication of a substantial amount of books and treatises covering a wide spectrum of subjects from both Italian and English writers; one surmises that his doing so from Patch was more of a pleasure than an execution of responsibility.<sup>30</sup> Patch addressed his work "to the lovers of the art of painting".<sup>31</sup> Was Patch here making a bold claim that visual evidence of the skill of Masaccio would induce those connoisseurs to bracket

<sup>28</sup>Maser, 1979, p. 194.

<sup>29</sup>*The Times*, 779, 29th November 1791.

<sup>30</sup>Brian Moloney, *Florence and England: Essays on cultural relations in the second half of the eighteenth century* (Firenze: Olschki, 1969) p. 23.

<sup>31</sup>Patch, 1772, p. 1.

that artist alongside those more conventionally esteemed painters and sculptors? If so, the status of Patch's engravings in the process - mediating Masaccio's frescoes - was left opaque. The text continues with Patch presupposing knowledge of Masaccio on the part of his audience, thus indicating that this volume was indeed targeted at a specific, rather than general, readership - those who were familiar with Vasari, either in the original or in an English translation such as Aglionby, in which Masaccio was characterised as the initiator of the restoration of painting. To underscore this observation, it is important to note that Patch both directly referred his reader to Vasari (recommending it as containing a fuller résumé of Masaccio's life and career) and directly lifted elements from Vasari's text, namely the two epitaphs recorded by Vasari at the end of his life of Masaccio.

Patch's conceptualisation of Masaccio brackets the Italian artist with Donatello and Ghiberti, which is a derivation of Vasari but also neatly fits in with the earlier author's heavily Christian tripartite emphasis throughout the *Vite*.<sup>32</sup> Those artists are praised for having rejuvenated the arts of sculpture and architecture and it was thanks to his acquaintance with them, Patch told his reader, that Masaccio acquired the significant artistic skills and knowledge that inaugurated a new stage in the development of painting. Masaccio's greatest achievement - privileged above knowledge of both the rules of perspective and antique forms - was "boldly imitating nature and drawing from life", a reflection of Patch's own artistic practice borne out by his caricatures. Such a view was in accordance with Leonardo da Vinci's appreciation of Masaccio but ran counter to seventeenth- and eighteenth-century artistic theory - concurrently being espoused by Reynolds in the *Discourses* - which held that nature could be improved upon by artists.<sup>33</sup> Of further significance is the fact that self-identification with Masaccio is a theme that runs through Patch's text. As Smiles notes, Patch's emphasis on Masaccio's demonstration of "a Philosophical indolence in not seeking to make a greater figure elsewhere" echoes Mann's description of Patch in a letter to Walpole of 1771: "he is quite a genius, has great merit, but prefers a quiet life to the much greater profit that he could make of it in England."<sup>34</sup> What has not been highlighted, though, is the fact that Patch's characterisation ignores Vasari's statement that Masaccio's turn to imitating nature was a product of his being "eager for the acquirement of fame".<sup>35</sup> Patch presumably focused on the

<sup>32</sup>The three stages of painting, each initiated by a single artist, suggestive of both the trinity and the coming of Christ.

<sup>33</sup>Leonardo wrote that Masaccio "showed by his perfect works how those who take for their standard any one but nature - the mistress of all masters - weary themselves in vain." Quoted in Hellmut Wohl, "Puro senza ornato": Masaccio, Cristoforo Landini and Leonardo da Vinci', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 56 (1993) pp. 256-260, which argues that Cristoforo Landino's much-lauded characterisation of Masaccio's style and achievements derived from Leonardo.

<sup>34</sup>Smiles, 2013, p. 53. Mann to Walpole, 25 January 1772 in Lewis, ed. vol. 23, 1969, p. 372.

<sup>35</sup>Vasari, trans. by Foster, 1851, p. 224. Vasari's use of the word 'fama' is also translated as



later section of Vasari's life which enumerates Masaccio's many personal qualities, one of which was his lack of concern regarding his "personal interests". Potentially negating Patch's interpretation, however, was his concern with highlighting the value of his own contribution to the study of art, which is also present in the Giotto and Ghiberti volumes. In the case of Masaccio, Patch pointed out that "the Works of this excellent Artist which ought to have been preserved with the utmost care have either been totally destroyed or much damaged, so that there is scarcely any remaining entire but what is in the Chapel of the family of Brancacci", thereby claiming notice for having both recognised the value of and chosen to publish copies after Masaccio's paintings as a dual act of preservation and publication.

It makes a great deal of sense, then, that Patch should have chosen Masaccio's Brancacci chapel frescoes as the subject of his first volume of engravings. Patch's choice was firmly underscored by the authority of both Vasari and two of the most highly-esteemed painters in the latter half of the eighteenth century:

Vasari gives a long description [of the Brancacci chapel frescoes] with such just encomiums as shew[sic] the great esteem that they were held in, at the time he wrote, when the Arts were at the Greatest height and so many great masters living, it will be sufficient to say that both Michelagnolo[sic] and Raphael studied after them and that the latter even condescended to introduce some of those figures into his own compositions having besides learnt from Masaccio the surest method of varying his Characters by taking them from nature.<sup>36</sup>

In addition to Michelangelo and Raphael, Vasari named another twenty-two artists who profited from the study of Masaccio's frescoes. Moreover, there is evidence that Patch personally had a strong aesthetic appreciation for those frescoes of Masaccio from which he chose to engrave details. Horace Mann wrote to Walpole that Patch "was always an adorer of the heads of Masaccio in [the] Carmine, and both drew them and engraved them himself" (Fig. 30).<sup>37</sup> The term 'adoration' suggests a depth of aesthetic appreciation for the Brancacci chapel frescoes atypical for the time (not to mention Mann's intimation that this was a long-held, rather than recent, interest). As previously referenced, contemporary evidence - in addition to the artist's own works - relates that Patch had a strong interest in physiognomy, which must have played a role in his attraction to the Brancacci frescoes.<sup>38</sup> Moreover,

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'fame' in Vasari, trans. Bondanella and Bondanella, 1991, p. 101.

<sup>36</sup>Patch, 1772 p. 3.

<sup>37</sup>Mann to Walpole, 22 February 1771 in Lewis, ed., vol. 23, 1969, p. 276.

<sup>38</sup>All the biographies of Patch relate an anecdote concerning his umbrage at the theft of a self-authored book about physiognomy prior to its publication by a French count, which is seemingly attested to by the inclusion of a self-portrait of Patch holding a book entitled *Le Regole del del*

Patch lived for over twenty years opposite the house of Horace Mann on via Santo Spirito, just two streets away from the Piazza del Carmine. This proximity and ease of access to the church thus obviously contributed to Patch's interest in the artworks within it, and his familiarity with Masaccio's works is evinced in his brief assessment of the artist's achievement, clearly based on a close study of his frescoes.<sup>39</sup>

If the decision to publish engravings after Masaccio's work was indeed prompted by Patch's personal taste for them, he would no doubt have been extremely gratified by the fulsome reaction of Horace Walpole, no less, to the volume as expressed in a letter to Mann of January 20th, 1771:

I am impatient to thank you for a present that I have received, and that you never mentioned having sent me. Sure it is not so insignificant! It is the volume of 'Masaccio's designs', brought by Mr. Coxe. I am transported with them! They are Nature itself, and evidently the precursors of Raphael. He plainly availed himself of their dignity but scarce reached the infinite truth of their expression. The action of the mouth in every head almost surpasses any other master, and seems to have been caught only by this. Oh! if there are more, make your Patch give us all. I cannot be content under all. They are admirably touched and executed: he must engrave the rest ...<sup>40</sup>

Walpole's comments are worth quoting in their entirety for their illumination of his appreciation of Masaccio; he was evidently familiar with the assessments of the Renaissance humanist and philosopher Cristoforo Landino (1424-92), and the implied negativity concerning Raphael's borrowings from the Brancacci frescoes - that he almost failed to replicate Masaccio's skill in expression - is extremely noteworthy.<sup>41</sup> One senses an almost proto-Ruskinian sensibility in Walpole's emphasis on

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*Fisionomizare* in a painting of 1774. The anecdote derives from a letter which is variously attributed to either Thomas or Gideon Caulet; Gideon Caulet was the step-son of Patch's younger brother, James, the surgeon of Norfolk Street who delivered Patch's volumes to Horace Walpole and, presumably, others. Watson, 1930-1940, p. 30. This interest in physiognomy is also present in the volume on Giotto, published two years later; almost half of the engravings for the volume are of single heads.

<sup>39</sup> "... the want of all [colouring, perspective, disposition of draperies] was soon discovered by Masaccio for in all his works there plainly appears an attempt to remedy those defects, besides a masterly freedom in his pencil". Patch, 1772, p. 2.

<sup>40</sup> Walpole to Mann, 20 January 1771 in Lewis, ed., vol. 23, 1967, pp. 266-267. Walpole's pleasure in Patch's engravings is also evidenced by this letter following hard on the heels of his last to Mann; the previous letter in their correspondence is dated January 15th, and the author both acknowledged the anomaly - "you will wonder to hear from me again so very soon" - and cited Patch's engravings as the sole reason.

<sup>41</sup> Landino, a Florentine humanist, praised Masaccio's style in his commentary on the *Divine Comedy* (1481), noting particularly his ability to imitate the true appearance of objects in nature. See 'Commento di Cristoforo Landino fiorentino sopra la Commedia di Dante' (Florence, 1481) in Roberto Cardini, ed., *Cristoforo Landino. Scritti critici e teorici*, vol. 1 (Rome: Bulzoni Editori,

the “truth” and sincerity of the frescoes. A decade later, following Patch’s death, it was the Masaccio engravings for which Walpole believed the artist would be remembered.<sup>42</sup>

Walpole’s identification of the Masaccio heads as being “Nature themselves” directs us to the methodology employed by Patch in his execution of the line engravings. As he himself informed his readers, Patch traced the heads directly from the frescoes themselves (compare Figs. 31 and 32; the seated figure in the right foreground in the fresco); logistics presumably account for the fact, therefore, that all of the engravings are taken from the bottom of the two registers of frescoes. The heads are excerpted from their narrative contexts, meaning that focus is directed solely to the various expressions exhibited by them. By doing so, Patch visually privileged Masaccio’s achievement in naturalism over those of perspective and composition, as he did textually in the volume’s introduction. Additionally, in many of the plates, Patch elected not to copy the heads of the main protagonists of the stories depicted but rather observers to the action (Figs. 33 and 34). The range of facial expressions depicted, therefore, is not wide, meaning that in the process of transferring his tracings to the engraving plate Patch was compelled to preserve and delineate the subtle variations in skin texture, feature shape and facial markings that comprise the individual characterisation of Masaccio’s figures with a high level of accuracy (Figs. 35, 36, 37 and 38). There appears again to be two narratives at play here, both of which take the concept of naturalism as a point of departure. The first is Patch’s offering of visual evidence for Masaccio’s exceptional skill in capturing a likeness from life - Patch’s text notes that many of the figures in the Brancacci chapel frescoes were portraits of known individuals - and the second is the exhibition of Patch’s skill at rendering that naturalism through the twin reproductive practices of copying and engraving. Of course, the irony here is that in copying Masaccio, Patch was also necessarily twice-removing himself from nature. Masaccio’s realism of line and detail derived from the study of nature itself. Patch, conversely, used engraving techniques of hatching and cross-hatching to produce a chiaroscuro effect, modelling the heads and group which he was replicating from a two-dimensional, rather than three-dimensional, source.

The most noteworthy aspect of Patch’s description of his approach to engraving Masaccio’s frescoes is his designation of his style as a “Pictoresque”[sic]

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1974) p. 124.

<sup>42</sup> “I am concerned for your loss of Patch: he had great merit in my eyes in bringing to light the admirable paintings of Masaccio, so little known out of Florence, till his prints disclosed them.” Walpole to Mann, 18 May 1782 in Lewis, ed., vol. 25, 1971, p. 280.

one, intended to “preserve the stile and the simplicity of the fresco”.<sup>43</sup> Patch’s use of the word ‘picturesque’ here corresponds with ‘rustic’ in its parallel Italian text, which accords with both Horace Mann’s description of Patch’s approach as a “careless manner” and Patch’s own admission that he did not employ the “exactness or the minute touches of a more accurate engraver.”<sup>44</sup> Patch evidently perceived the quality of simplicity as being specific to both the medium of fresco and Masaccio’s style, however, and this can be related to his actions in tracing the frescoes. As the means of transmission of Masaccio’s designs to a wider audience, Patch seems to have considered accuracy his biggest responsibility, and this is further indicated by Mann’s describing him as “enter[ing] into the character of the author.” A parallel can be drawn between Patch’s approach and that of a contemporaneous and better-known Venetian artist, Antonio Maria Zanetti (1706-1778). In the preface to his *Varie pitture a fresco de’ principali maestri veneziani*, published in 1760, he discussed the necessity of suppressing his own style or hand so as to achieve maximum fidelity to the original image being reproducing (Fig. 39), opining:

There are people who appreciate prints made with great dexterity and panache with confident strokes; these are the experts and the *dilettanti* ... Most people like those closely finished prints executed with delicacy and particularly those with strong chiaroscuro, whereby the visual senses are immediately attracted and held. The author realised that it would be difficult to please such diverse tastes and he himself, being aware of the opinions of the connoisseurs, or those who profess to be, was inclined to the free and spontaneous method of engraving ... He has attempted and tried to maintain a technique that would please one without displeasing the other, Moreover, he adjudged it to be even more important and necessary to execute these prints with a close finish when he realised that by using the other method the original paintings were misrepresented and lost much of their original beauty.<sup>45</sup>

There is a degree to which Zanetti was evidently attempting to forestall criticism in this extract. Incidentally, the drawing of attention to the simple, linear style (Fig. 40) of Patch’s engravings may also have been a strategy employed by Patch to obviate his ability as an engraver. Mann’s letter describing Patch’s career attests to the fact that he was a self-taught engraver of only one or two years prior to the publication of the Masaccio volume, which is further corroborated by the earliest dates in the mid-1760s of Patch’s surviving engraved caricatures. Given the high level of expertise warranted in line engraving (manifested by a particularly long period of

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<sup>43</sup>Patch, 1772, p. 4.

<sup>44</sup>Mann to Walpole, 22 February 1771 in Lewis, ed., vol. 23, 1969, p. 275 and Patch, 1772, p. 4.

<sup>45</sup>Translated in Lloyd and Leger, 1975, pp. 10-11.

training to attain competence), an effect of simplicity in the finished plates may be as much an indication of Patch's technical limitations as his authorial intentions.

Smiles intimates that in both style and content Patch's engravings after Masaccio were a redaction of the original artist's work and differ from contemporary prints after old masters, many of which strove to emulate the painterly qualities of their source material through the employment of mezzotint.<sup>46</sup> Indeed, there is a marked difference in the chiaroscuro effects and general finish between Patch's plates - both the individual heads and the groups - and a mezzotint such as that by Ludvig von Siegen after Annibale Carracci's *Holy Family and St John the Baptist* (Figs. 41 and 42), but Patch did attempt an evocation of Masaccio's depiction of light and shade through cross-hatching, as is evidenced by a comparison of his plates with their original sources (Figs. 43 and 44). Perhaps, too, Patch's employment of line engraving as his vehicle of reproduction, with its quality of emphasis on design over other painterly qualities, was a nod to his subject's Tuscan origins and the *disegno/colorito* debate. Horace Walpole certainly enthused about the execution of the Masaccio plates and continued to appreciate Patch's engraving style in his later productions (even despite the fact that Patch's volume on Fra Bartolommeo was a disappointment, as it revealed to Walpole the absence "of the great ideas I thought I remembered in [Fra Bartolommeo]; at least he is far below the amazing Masaccio").<sup>47</sup> Patch continued to employ the medium of line engraving, and indeed produced a single plate one year after the Masaccio volume which copied a fresco by Paolo Uccello, another largely-disregarded *Quattrocentista*.<sup>48</sup>

Any assessment of Patch's engravings after Masaccio must finally confront a rather large elephant in the room and admit to the instability of the term 'Masaccio' in this context. In the above paragraphs, it was demonstrated that the Horaces Walpole and Mann - who had both seen the Brancacci chapel frescoes for themselves - accepted Patch's attribution of them to Masaccio without question. Almost all of the heads and both of the groups that Patch copied, though, are now considered to have been executed by Filippino Lippi. Thus the head in the first plate, which Patch correctly identified as being a self-portrait is a self-portrait of Lippi rather than Masaccio (Figs. 45, 46 and 47).<sup>49</sup> In Patch's defence, the Vasarian accounts of the authorship of the Brancacci Chapel frescoes distinctly lacked clarity as to which artist(s) were responsible for which fresco, and post-Vasarian writers

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<sup>46</sup>Smiles, 2013, p. 54.

<sup>47</sup>Walpole to Mann, 28 December 1771, Lewis, ed., vol. 23, 1967, p. 362.

<sup>48</sup>This work will be considered later in the chapter as part of an examination of Patch's legacy.

<sup>49</sup>It must be noted that doubts have frequently been cast on the authenticity of Fig. 47, most thoroughly in Bruce Cole and Ulrich Middeldorf, 'Masaccio, Lippi, or Hugford?', *Burlington Magazine*, 113 (1971) pp. 501-507.

were polarised on the subject of Lippi's involvement. Additionally, Patch was not the sole late-eighteenth-century artist to make this mistake with Masaccio, as is evidenced by the six plates bound together with Patch's *Vita di Masaccio* in the Biblioteca Nazionale di Firenze. These plates are engravings by Tommaso Piroli, who would later engage in a fruitful collaboration with John Flaxman, of compositions from the Brancacci chapel, some of which - such as the *Temptation* - were widely attributed to Masolino.<sup>50</sup> Piroli, however, credited all of his engravings as having been copied from Masaccio's work. That Patch's engravings have frequently received only cursory scholarly attention can be directly correlated to the significant errors in attribution in the Masaccio volume and, moreover, those in *La Vita di Giotto*, the publication to which this chapter will now turn.

## La Vita di Giotto.

The Walpole-Mann correspondence again elucidates important details regarding the genesis of Patch's following publications, *La Vita di Fra Bartolommeo* and *La Vita di Giotto*. Another demonstration of his genuine appreciation of the Masaccio volume was Walpole's canvassing Mann as to Patch's future activities:

... there is one more work [Patch] must perform too. I remember at Florence a very few pictures of Fra Bartolommeo, another parent of Raphael, and whose ideas I thought, if possible, greater: as there is such a scarcity of his works, and as they have never that I know been engraved, at least not so well I am persuaded as these by Patch, make him add them to another set of Masaccio's heads. It will immortalize you both to preserve such works.<sup>51</sup>

Walpole's request for more Masaccio heads has hitherto been uncommented on. It plainly reflects the lack of visual sources for early Italian artists in England in the early 1770s, as the introductory chapters of this thesis enumerated. However, it seems that Patch did not comply; perhaps the fire which destroyed so much of Santa Maria del Carmine, occurring mere weeks after Walpole sent his letter, precluded any hope of fulfilling Walpole's requests. Mann's response demonstrates that Patch's plans for a series of volumes "after every author" were developing apace; he included with his letter an 'avviso al pubblico' (now missing) for another volume, on which Patch was by all accounts already working, which was to include

<sup>50</sup>Piroli's plates follow after Patch's in the volume. Biblioteca Nazionale di Firenze, C.B.3.34. Piroli's engravings have survived in libraries and collections throughout the world, but whether they were published as a set is difficult to ascertain.

<sup>51</sup>Walpole to Mann, 20 January 1771 in Lewis, ed., vol. 23, 1967, p. 267.

“the celebrated picture [Walpole] mentioned of Fra Bartolomeo at St Mark’s with others of Michel Angiolo [sic], Andrea del Sarto, etc. etc., to make up the number of 24.”<sup>52</sup> A work of that nature does not exist, suggesting that Patch felt it more expedient to execute something more akin to Walpole’s proposition. And again, Walpole’s reaction determined Patch’s actions. The introduction to *La Vita di Fra Bartolommeo* sets out a plan to reproduce all of Bartolommeo’s extant paintings in a projected five volumes, following a similar format to his previous publication with each volume containing twenty-four plates prefaced by an introduction. Patch’s approach with this work, however, was to differ from the Masaccio volume in one significant respect; he claimed that he would offer the reader “a description and measure of each picture”. Reading the word ‘measure’ as a synonym for ‘judgement’, this undertaking to provide a critique of the Fra Bartolommeo paintings is perhaps a reflection of their greater familiarity to their audience. Only two volumes of engravings exist, though, which is most likely attributable to Walpole’s marked displeasure with them. Walpole took exception to Fra Bartolommeo’s lack of design, rather than any deficiencies in technique or feeling in Patch’s copies, but as Walpole was such an instrumental figure in the dispersal or, to put it more plainly, sale of Patch’s work (as will be further evidenced) it follows that Patch would have been inclined to tailor his choice of publications to Walpole’s taste.<sup>53</sup>

Luckily, however, Patch was simultaneously studying another fresco cycle in the Carmine that would soon be of great topical relevance. The introduction to *La Vita di Giotto* implies that Patch had already begun making copies for his own pleasure from a fresco cycle depicting the life of St John the Baptist, then attributed to Giotto, and that it was the almost total destruction of the cycle by the 1771 fire that led him to publish the engraved versions of his drawings as important historical records.<sup>54</sup> This statement then seemingly contradicts Patch’s comment in his first volume of 1770 that Masaccio’s “freedom of pencil” was a significant marker of the perfection of art as a movement away from “the disagreeable stiffness in the horri-

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., note 6. Walpole confirmed receipt of some plates by Patch after Fra Bartolommeo in a letter dated 28th December 1771 - presumably the first series of twenty-four plates - and then another set early in 1773, along with the Giotto volume.

<sup>53</sup>Walpole made his objections twice, the first of which was cited earlier in this chapter. However, by Mann’s account Patch had already begun at least his copies of Bartolommeo’s colossal *Pala della Signoria* and seemingly was not dissuaded by Walpole’s criticism at this point, as Mann asked Walpole - and Walpole agreed - to accept the dedication of this forthcoming volume. The plates of the second suite of Fra Bartolommeo etchings (some of which incorporate aquatint) are all undated save the final, folding, plate, which is dated 1773, and in the extant copies of the Fra Bartolommeo volume - some of which contain both suites of etchings, and others just the first (such as the bound folio in the British Library) - the introduction comprises only two pages and relates only to the first twenty-four plates.

<sup>54</sup>Patch, 1772, p. 7.

ble spectres of the School of Giotto”.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, the dedication of this volume is to Bernardo Manetti (Fig. 48), a descendent of the original patron of the chapel; Patch praised “these monuments” - the frescoes - as illustrative of the “antient[sic] splendour” of the Manetti family, further suggesting an appreciation of them. Patch continued by expressing the hope that the volume would also afford pleasure to those others who were inclined to “reflect on the different stages of Painting.”<sup>56</sup>

The textual introduction of *La Vita di Giotto* foregrounds its two indisputable contributions to scholarship. The first was the value of the volume as the only record of the Manetti chapel fresco cycle in existence: “Those pictures of Giotto in the Church of the Carmelites, are no more to be seen accepting [sic] in the following prints, as they have been destroy’d since the fire, which happened the 28th January last year.”<sup>57</sup> Although both the purported Giotto fresco cycle and that jointly executed by Masaccio, Masolino and Filippino Lippi in the Brancacci chapel were described by Vasari, the church of the Carmelites was certainly not a highlight of the traditional Florentine tourist itinerary in the eighteenth century. As Rosemary Sweet has pointed out, the geography of Florence for eighteenth-century British tourists was severely limited, with most visitors confining their visits to the Duomo, the Ponte Vecchio and the Uffizi.<sup>58</sup> However, the attention that would undoubtedly have been directed towards the church and its artworks following the fire represented an opportunity, and Patch cannily positioned his volume as a unique and therefore valuable record. Second is Patch’s claim that he was presenting the first engravings after Giotto to the public as a reference source for those interested in the on-going debate concerning the origins of Italian Renaissance art. This debate, as the introductory chapters of this thesis detailed, constituted a significant body of literature which appeared as a counterpoint to Vasari’s argument for the centrality of Florence in the story of art’s progress. Again, therefore, it can be argued that Patch’s positioning of his volume to appeal to a pre-existing readership is indicative of a very clear commercial strategy.

The plates of *La Vita di Giotto* differ from those in the preceding volumes in terms of organisation and approach. The illustrations commence with Patch’s copy of the bust of Giotto, executed by Benedetto di Maiano for Florence’s Duomo (Fig. 49). Underneath is the epitaph also used by Vasari, and below that some lines of text from Patch identifying the sculptor of the bust and attesting to its having

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<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>56</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>57</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup>Rosemary Sweet, ‘British Perceptions of Florence in the Long Eighteenth Century’, *The Historical Journal*, 50 (2007), pp. 837-859.



been commissioned by the Medici ruler Lorenzo the Magnificent due to his “particular affection” for the divine and virtuous Giotto. Patch also gave a Vasarian page reference which corresponds with the second edition of the *Vite*, a useful marker for knowledge of Patch’s own source texts. In the remainder of the volume, for the first time, engravings of figural groups outnumber those of individual heads and are given precedence. This artistic choice can undoubtedly be directly related to the engravings being the only existing records of the chapel’s fresco programme; plates II-VII each depict one of the six scenes known to have comprised the scheme (Figs. 50, 51, 52, 53, 54 and 55). Patch numbered his plates slightly out of order, with his engraving of the lunette depicting the *Annunciation to San Zaccharia* placed in between the *Birth and Giving of the Name to the Newborn* and the *Baptism of Christ and Sermon of St John* - which are thought to have been the central scenes facing one another - rather than as the first of the plates. The volume ends with five individual heads (Figs. 56, 57, 58, 59 and 60) both male and female (those in the Masaccio volume being all male), although the huge disparity in quality between the individual heads and the whole compositions from which they were taken hampers identification. Stefan Weppelmann identified plates IX and X as figures from the right-hand figural group of the annunciation scene.<sup>59</sup> If he is correct, then it would seem that Patch did not trace these heads, as he did with those by Masaccio, as they are not reversed on the plates. Instead, however, the high level of detail in the individual heads probably originates from the other strand of Patch’s conservatory activities in relation to this particular fresco cycle.

In December 1771, the *Gazzetta Toscana* published a brief notice regarding the status of the fire-ravaged Santa Maria del Carmine which attested to the activities of not just Patch but another English artist:

Some paintings have been detached from the walls of the burnt church of the Carmine, and reduced to the form of pictures: those of the Manetti chapel by the hand of Giotto assisted diligently by Mr.[Patch], a talented English painter living in this city for a long time; and those of the Poccetti and the Naldini parts of the nave have been raised, and very well brought together by the skilful Mr. Xavier Picchianti a young apprentice in the studio of Mr. Francis [Harwood] English sculptor, and no small praise is deserved because of the difficulty of cleanly detaching such works from a very thin plaster cracked and suffered from the violence of fire.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>59</sup>Stefan Weppelmann, *Spinello Aretino e la pittura del trecento in Toscana* (Firenze: Edizioni Polistampa, 2011) cat. no. 42.

<sup>60</sup>“Sono state staccate dalle pareti della incendiata chiesa del carmine alcune pitture, e ridotte in forma di quadri: a quelle di cappella manetti di mano di giotto assistè diligentemente il sig

‘sig pace’ [sic] was obviously Patch, and this report legitimises his claim in the introduction to *La Vita di Giotto* that he had “saved some pieces with the permission of the owners of the chapel, which [he had] taken of[sic] the wall”.<sup>61</sup> According to Weppelmann’s catalogue there are twelve known fragments deriving from the cycle, one having been detached in 1763-1764 - (k) *St John at the moment of decapitation* (Patch, *Vita di Giotto*, Plate VII), owned by the Marchese Malaspina between 1825 and 1830 and in the collection of the Pinacoteca Civica Pavia from 1838 - and the others between 1765-1770. Those Weppelmann credited as having been originally owned by Patch were (c) *figure of a young woman*, now in the Boymans-van Beuningen Museum, Amsterdam (Patch, *Vita di Giotto*, Plate II); (e) *figure of women with St John in strips* (Patch, *Vita di Giotto*, Plate III) and (i) *Salome* (Patch, *Vita di Giotto*, Plate VI), both now at the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool; and (l) *heads of two saints in mourning* (Patch, *Vita di Giotto*, Plate VII), now in the National Gallery, London. Plate XI of the Giotto volume shows the head of Salome, in a rather ironic reversal of her role in the narrative scene from which the figure is taken, and a comparison of the fragment with Patch’s plate immediately evidences the veracity of Patch’s copy (Figs. 61 and 62).<sup>62</sup> All of this would suggest that Patch worked directly from these fragments he detached in the preparation of his volume, although whether he obtained permission to detach them from the walls of the chapel expressly for that purpose or with the intention of selling them is impossible to ascertain. All four fragments were sold by Patch to the collector and connoisseur Charles Townley in February 1772 during one of the latter’s grand tours.<sup>63</sup> Patch was therefore directly responsible for the importation of the first fourteenth-century Italian fresco fragments into Britain, and the impact of his role as a dealer in this instance will be explored shortly in this chapter.<sup>64</sup>

pace valente pittore inglese abitante in questa città da molto tempo; e quelle della navata parte del Poccetti e parte del Naldini sono state levate, e molto ben riunite insieme dall’abile sig. Saverio picchianti giovane dello studio del sig. Francesco harvrod scultore inglese, e non scarsa lode si è meritato per la difficoltà di staccarle pulitamente da un intonaco molto sottile e screpolato dalla violenza del fuoco sofferto.” *Gazzetta Toscana*, 49, (December 1771) p. 163. Francis Harwood lived in Florence for twenty years, where he also was esteemed by Mann.

<sup>61</sup>Patch, 1772, p. 7.

<sup>62</sup>This is the only direct comparison between one of Patch’s heads and its original that is possible to make with regard to this publication; Weppelmann identified the other individual heads in *La Vita di Giotto* as being taken from the *Annunciation* fresco, from which no fragments are known to have survived. Weppelmann, 2011, cat. 42.

<sup>63</sup>A note in Townley’s papers dated Feb 7th, 1772, records payment of 48” to “Mr Patch for pieces in Fresco by Giotto taken from the wall of the church of the Carmine lately burnt at Florence”. As previously referenced, Gerard Vaughan argued that Townley’s purchase of the fragments were indicative of a wider interest on his part in medievalism, long obscured by his reputation as an arbiter of classical taste. See Vaughan, 2002, pp. 297-314. That Townley did indeed actively want the fragments is suggested by aspects of the surviving Patch-Townley correspondence; it would seem that Townley chose to decline a marble *Venus* by Giambologna over which he gave Patch “great hopes of buying”, but continued to use Patch as dealer until at least 1776.

<sup>64</sup>That Townley is continually identified as responsible for bringing the fragments to England in the subsequent sale catalogues recording their fate further emphasises the importance of his (and

However, documentary evidence uncovered in the nineteenth century proved that the frescoes in the Manetti chapel, the authorship of which was given by Patch to Giotto, were actually executed by Spinello Aretino.<sup>65</sup> Patch arguably had a greater case as to his defence in this instance; he was, of course, only adhering to Vasari's established attribution, which would not be definitively disproved for over a century. And again, as with Masaccio and described in the previous section of this thesis, Giotto's career was far more familiar as a literary construct than through actual visual evidence in Florence. He was not represented by a painting in the newly-created *Gabinetto de Antichi Quadri* in the Uffizi and, although Luigi Lanzi did mention some Giotto drawings in the collection, he described them as "rather suspect."<sup>66</sup> Patch himself intimated possessing a modicum of doubt as to equating the artistic quality of the so-called Giotto frescoes in the Manetti chapel with their attribution as given by Vasari. It is possible that Patch *may* have seen authentic frescoes by Giotto at Padua and therefore been able to draw on either his recollection or a personal visual record as a point of comparison, as a conversation group of the early 1760s (*A group of antiquaries at Pola*, now at Dunham Massey) attests to his having visited the Veneto. Patch also disputed Vasari's dating of the fresco cycle he engraved. Giotto's alleged work in the Carmine, where he painted "the entire life of [St John the Baptist] divided into several different pictures", is located early on in Vasari's narrative, prior to the artist's work in Assisi and Rome.<sup>67</sup> Patch, however, placed the frescoes within the last five years of Giotto's life (the 1330s).<sup>68</sup> Spinello Aretino is often characterised as the Trecento artist who most successfully assimilated Giotto's artistic principles, and there are certainly more stylistic affinities between the surviving Carmine fresco fragments and Giotto's late work than, for example, the frescoes in the Arena Chapel at Padua (Figs. 63, 64, 65 and 66).<sup>69</sup>

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therefore Patch's) action.

<sup>65</sup>The attribution to Spinello Aretino, a Sienese artist active between c. 1335-1395, was first made by the art historian Vitzthum in the early twentieth century. See George Graf Vitzthum, 'Un ciclo di affreschi di Spinello Aretino, perduto', *L'Arte*, 9 (1906) pp. 199-203.

<sup>66</sup>"di Giotto qualche immagine piuttosto dubbia." Lanzi, 1782, ed. by Frangini, Novello and Romei, 1982, p. 70. Lanzi offered an apologia for the uneven nature of the collection in this room, describing it as a work in progress.

<sup>67</sup>Vasari, trans. by Bondanella and Bondanella, 1991, p. 18.

<sup>68</sup>Patch, 1772, p. 8. He cited the Florentine historian Cinelli's description of the commission.

<sup>69</sup>Bernard Berenson, *Italian Pictures of the Renaissance: Florentine School*, vol. 1 (London: Phaidon Press, 1963) pp. 202-206. Spinello Aretino's artistic personality was frequently conflated with that of Giotto in nineteenth-century Britain. It is interesting to note that all the Giotto frescoes sold at auction during the long eighteenth century are now given to Spinello. Although the latter artist also received a biography in the first and second editions of the *Vite*, he was largely an unknown quantity in Britain, as no works attributed to him appeared on the art market prior to the mid nineteenth century. Undoubtedly, Giotto was the better known and more highly regarded artist of the two, which may have led dealers to knowingly pass off Aretino's works as Giottos to make more money.

This example of Patch exercising independent critical acumen in the case of the ‘Giotto’ frescoes illustrates his scholarly approach to such early art and his desire to understand, rather than just accept, the contribution to the amelioration of painting that it evinced. This is compounded by a concern for visual accuracy which manifested itself in his faithful rendering of both the underlying synopie (Figs. 67 and 68) that became visible on the chapel walls following the destruction wrought by the fire and of the modern restorations which had taken place in 1763-1764, allowing the reader to formulate a clear understanding of both the artist’s original idea and the subsequent repainting. Patch explained his methodology as follows:

I have marked out the places where only remains the outlines in red, under the coat of plastering where the painting was, and the same is likewise to be seen in the *Campo Santo* at Pisa. I have likewise marked out with a dotted line, the parts which have been modernly repainted in the original lines.”<sup>70</sup>

Moreover, his citing of the similarities between the execution of the synopie in the Manetti chapel frescoes and those in the Campo Santo at Pisa further demonstrates his commitment to the ideal of gathering knowledge of artists’ differing styles and techniques based on physical evidence, an ideal that was advanced by Baldinucci, developed by Bottari and reiterated by Lanzi.<sup>71</sup>

### ***Porta del Battistero di San Giovanni di Firenze.***

There is no surviving evidence illuminating Patch’s motivation for publishing his last volume, engravings of Lorenzo Ghiberti’s *Gates of Paradise*. However, it seems reasonable to suggest that the debate surrounding the preventative painting-over

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<sup>70</sup>Patch, 1772, p. 8.

<sup>71</sup>Baldinucci, in the preface to his *Notizie*, on the benefit of organising the Medici drawing collection chronologically: “with unimpeachable evidence from the artists’ own hands, the progress of art could then be recognised, not from reading but through ones eyes.” Quoted in Smiles, 2013, p. 52. “Il pensiero del Vasari è ottimo di far vedere il principio, gli accrescimenti, i progressi e la perfezione della pittura, e sarebbe bene avere di tutti l’arti una simile importantissima notizia. Per averla della pittura, non basta sapere i nomi di coloro che a poco a poco la condussero alla sua sovrana eccellenza, ma bisognerebbe veder le loro opere, e che fossero corredate delle necessarie osservazioni. Ora queste sono difficili a vedersi, perché sono sparse per tuuta l’Italia e fuori ... Sicché sarebbe un’opera utilitissima e immortale che facesse intagliare d’ogni pittore una figura o un’istoria delle più conservate e più notabili de’ quali il Vasari o fa particolar menzione, cominciando da Cimabue. Non dico di tutti, ma di quelli che andaron migliorando l’arte fino Raffaello, facendo sopra ogni stampa le osservazioni circa il miglioramento di ciascuno.” Vasari, *Vite*, 1568, ed. by Giovanni Gaetano Bottari, vol. ii (Roma, 1759-1760). “How much more will the amateur lovers of art appreciate being able to see within a cabinet these advancements [in painting] step by step, not in relation, but in fact; not described, but drawn, and coloured; not weighed through other people’s judgement, but recognised with their own?” Lanzi’s justification for the creation of the *Gabinetto di Antichi Quadri*. Lanzi, 1782, p. 68.

of the bronze gates with dark green oil paint - the city of Florence's reaction to Anton Raphael Mengs's offer to clean them - may have encouraged Patch's desire to copy the reliefs.<sup>72</sup> This publication is the most identifiably influential of the four produced by Patch as it contains a transcription of a significant original manuscript relating to the commissioning of the gates from Ghiberti. This was kept, according to the authors, in "an office called l'arte de' Fabbricanti" and it disappeared at some point following the appearance of Patch's volume in 1775, meaning that later scholars have unanimously relied on Patch's transcription. The higher status thus immediately accorded this final volume is evidenced by three fundamental factors: Patch's collaboration on the engravings with Ferdinando Gregori; the dedication of the volume to Pietro Leopoldo, the Grand Duke of Tuscany; and the repeated press it garnered in the mid-1770s. These crucial points will now be explored.

The earliest mention of the Ghiberti volume occurs in an issue of the *Gazzetta Toscana* dated September 1772, and the newspaper's readership was updated further as to the publication's developments in December 1772 and May 1773.<sup>73</sup> The first report identified Patch and Gregori as co-authors, giving a date for the first series of engravings produced and celebrating their achievement:

The work undertaken by Mr. ferdinando gregori [sic], and tommaso patch [sic] deserves not just a little commendation, as it brought to light to the first number of the copper engravings of the famous doors of St. John Baptist of this our city excellently produced by the famous ghiberti [sic] pulled intact from the original on imperial paper.<sup>74</sup>

The date of September 1772 accords with notes in Horace Mann's letter-book of August 25th and September 1st; the first recorded Mann's having sent Walpole "the proposals for St John gates", and the second the first suite of engravings themselves along with the Giotto volume.<sup>75</sup> The proposals mentioned by Mann have not survived in the Walpole library, but are perhaps the introduction to the entire volume (which was printed in 1775). The letter accompanying the proposals informed Walpole that he would receive "Patch's caricaturas and his 'Gates of St. John' by the first opportunity. Zoffany is charmed with them". It is somewhat ambiguous as to which of the two listed items Zoffany was charmed by. It is significant, though,

<sup>72</sup>See Gaetano Milanesi, 'A Proposito della Tintura delle Porte di San Giovanni', *Arte e Storia*, 4 (1885) for a full discussion of the controversy.

<sup>73</sup>*Gazzetta Toscana*, 38 (September 1772) p. 150; 52 (December 1772) p. 208; and 19 (May 1773) p. 73 respectively.

<sup>74</sup>*Gazzetta Toscana*, 38 (September 1772) p. 150. "Merita non poco di esser commendata l'opera intrapresa dai sigg. ferdinando gregori, e tommaso patch, di cui è stato dato alla luce il primo numero della incisione in rame delle celebri porte di santo giovanni batista di questa nostra città eccellentemente lavorate dal famoso ghiberti tirata dagli originali in carta imperiali intera."

<sup>75</sup>S.P. 105/296 f. 41 and f. 42, respectively. Lewis, ed. 1969, p. 429.

that the Royal Academy in London acquired a series of plaster casts - approximately forty - after the Ghiberti gates in 1773; perhaps Zoffany was the courier for these, as he evidently was for the Patch painting over which there was such a rumpus, and perhaps too Patch played a role in the obtaining of the casts on the RA's behalf.<sup>76</sup>

The following newspaper advertisement, dated December 1772, informs us that Patch and Gregori had, by this point, published two sets of the Ghiberti engravings and that the third was expected that following January.<sup>77</sup> Finally, in May 1773 it was announced that the authors had received the great honour of gaining permission from the Grand Duke Leopoldo - "S.A.R." or *sua altezza reale* - to dedicate the entire corpus of material to him.<sup>78</sup> This dedication appears as the frontispiece to the entire volume, and is dated 1775. The advertisements in the *Gazzetta Toscana*, not previously cited in discussions of the *Porta del Battistero di San Giovanni di Firenze*, counter Julius Schlosser's belief that it was targeted primarily at British tourists visiting Florence.<sup>79</sup> As the adverts evidence, Patch's work was also marketed in Italy and particularly towards members of Florence's artistic circle. The first advertisement detailed a specific price (12 paoli) at which the volumes would be offered to "the associates" - by whom the authors presumably meant the associates of the *Accademia del Disegno*. Moreover, the final advert indicates that Patch and Gregori indeed found a reliable and relatively substantial readership amongst this group, as it stipulated that the associates would receive the fifth set of engravings, which they were currently working on and which would include the dedication to Pietro Leopoldo, augmented by his portrait, for free.<sup>80</sup>

Schlosser's main point about the Ghiberti publication, however, holds true. This was that it marks the true beginning of an historical treatment of that artist's work, as the lack of interest in Ghiberti's doors prior to the involvement of Mengs, Patch and Gregori is demonstrated precisely by the need for material interven-

<sup>76</sup>RA Council Minutes, 22 October 1773, RAA/PC/1/1. Patch himself also owned a set of Mengs's casts, according to a notice in the *Gazzetta Toscana* announcing a sale of his effects following his death: "Presso gli Eredi di Sig. Tommaso Patch ne' Fondacci di S. Spirito si trova vendibile il primo getto della famosa Porta del Ghiberti del Tempio di S. Giovanni di questa Città, con altri rari busti, e Statue di gesso, e di marmo, pitture, stampe, bronze ecc." *Gazzetta Toscana*, 9 (March, 1773), p. 4. Attempts to trace this sale further have met with disappointment.

<sup>77</sup>*Gazzetta Toscana*, 52 (December 1772) p. 208.

<sup>78</sup>*Gazzetta Toscana*, 19 (May 1773) p. 73.

<sup>79</sup>As cited by Maser, 1979, p. 197. Schlosser based this on the opening sentence of the introduction to the engravings, which reads: "The third gate of the Baptistery of S. John in the City of Florence is one of the most renowned Monuments of Modern Sculpture and though Celebrated by many Authors can be known but to a few Strangers who have had an opportunity to examine it, we therefore have undertaken to engrave it". Thomas Patch and Ferdinando Gregori, *Porta del Battistero di San Giovanni di Firenze*, (Firenze, 1775) p. 1.

<sup>80</sup>*Gazzetta Toscana*, 19 (May 1773) p. 73.

tion.<sup>81</sup> Indeed, Patch and Gregori identified a weakness in the scholarship concerning Lorenzo Ghiberti and made a significant attempt to rectify it by transcribing the *arte de'fabbricanti* document, prefacing it as follows:

The Authors, who have wrote so much of Lorenzo Ghiberti, who made it [the third gate of the baptistery] and of the restoration of Sculpture have left so many doubts both in regard to the time and circumstances of this work that we have thought it most proper in publishing it to add an authentick abstract from a Manuscript which is kept in a public office called l'arte de' Fabbricanti and is entitled an account of the second and third Gate of S. John in Florence.<sup>82</sup>

According to the transcription, the above-mentioned document detailed the terms of the commission and therefore imparted significant information as to the payments involved and the arrangements of Ghiberti's *bottega*.

The methodology of the authors is further attested to by another piece of important information contained with the introduction to the plates. As with the Masaccio and Giotto volumes, Patch traced the reliefs directly, thus ensuring the fidelity of the engravings.<sup>83</sup> However, Patch appears to have been involved in the production of only a handful of plates in this volume, judging by the signatures given, with Gregori completing the majority of the work.<sup>84</sup> Whether this was an active choice on the part of the authors - Smiles argues that Gregori's more advanced engraving technique may have dictated his taking the lead on translating the Ghiberti reliefs to paper - or one affected by less artistic considerations (epistolary evidence reveals that Patch suffered considerable ill health in the latter half of the 1770s) is unknown.<sup>85</sup> The letterpress and the earliest plate, the *Creation of Eve*, are both dated 1772 and jointly signed by Patch and Gregori as are two further

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<sup>81</sup>Once again, however, the name of Joshua Reynolds must be introduced into this discussion, as he appears to have anticipated Patch in studying the doors whilst in Florence in 1752. Giuliana Perini has very recently identified a sketch in one of Reynolds's Italian sketchbooks as being a copy of one of Ghiberti's *Gates of Paradise* reliefs, that of St. John the Evangelist sat with head and an arm resting on a pile of books. Giuliana Perini, *Sir Joshua Reynolds in Italia* (Firenze: Olschki, 2012) p. 235.

<sup>82</sup>Patch and Gregori, 1774, p. 1.

<sup>83</sup>Smiles, 2013, pp. 54-55.

<sup>84</sup>As Smiles details, of the plates not including Patch's name those of 1772 are signed just 'Ferd Gregori Scul.', whereas from 1773 onwards all the plates are signed "Ferd Gregori delin. Scul.". It seems reasonable to assume therefore that, despite the absence of his name, Patch was responsible for the drawings made in 1772. Interestingly, however, many of the plates in the volume in the British Library have Patch's stamp on them, with Gregori's monogram written(?) inside. This copy is missing three plates, and the name "L. Gardiner Esq." is written on the back of one of the sheets in pencil.

<sup>85</sup>Smiles, 2013, p. 56. A letter from Horace Mann dated Florence November 18th 1777 informed the recipient, William Hamilton (British Ambassador to Naples), that Patch had just suffered an "attack of epilepsy" (British Library MS Eg. 2641).

plates - the frontispiece with the dedication to Pietro Leopoldo, dated 1773, and the title page, dated 1774. This last comprises an entire rendering of the gates annotated with a numerical key designed to match up with both the numbered plates depicting Ghiberti's ten reliefs and a series of engravings (constituting twenty-two plates and also numbered) of the surrounding sculptural decoration; this plan enabled the reader to assemble a complete, half-scale, facsimile of the gates. This awareness of the necessity of providing the reader with direct access to both the fundamental narrative of the gates and an experience of their artistic totality is an important development from Patch's treatment of the Brancacci chapel fresco cycle.

## Patch's impact and influence.

This chapter will now turn to weighing up the intrinsic value of Patch's volumes of engravings - their specific contributions to art-historical scholarship - against the wider impact they had upon British taste. Each of the four volumes is prefaced by introductions in both Italian and English, suggesting that they were intended for sale in both countries. As has been discussed earlier in this chapter, it is logical to assume that Patch would not have had his engravings after early masters published in either country had he not believed in a substantial audience for them, and his comments concerning his own ingenuity at being the first to publish such volumes further indicate his awareness of his own astuteness. Additionally, it has also already been intimated that it was Patch's friendship with Horace Mann which served as the primary conduit for bringing his work to the attention of influential figures in the British art world, as it was through Mann that Horace Walpole became acquainted with Patch's engravings. Walpole believed that Patch's contribution to introducing the British cognoscenti to early Italian art was immeasurable, writing upon the occasion of Patch's death in 1782 that the artist had had "great merit ... in bringing to light the admirable paintings of Masaccio, so little known out of Florence till his prints disclosed them."<sup>86</sup> Indeed, Walpole was so enamoured with the Masaccio volume that he showed it to the President of the Royal Academy, Sir Joshua Reynolds.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>86</sup>See note 38.

<sup>87</sup>"I am expecting Sir Joshua Reynolds, our best painter, whom I have sent for, to see some wonderful miniatures I have bought, and these heads of Masaccio. I think they may give him such lights as to raise him prodigiously. I must repeat it, the mouths, and often the eyes, are life itself." Walpole to Mann, 20 January 1771 in Lewis, vol. 23, 1969, pp. 267-268. In the same letter, Walpole requested two more copies of the Masaccio volume to give to other (unidentified) people. It is interesting that Walpole was the instrument for Reynolds receiving a copy of the Masaccio engravings (if indeed he did; the Phillips sale catalogue of Reynolds's collection of drawings, scarce prints and books of prints records only "the works of Bartolomeo, with his life by T. Patch". London, 1798, p. 34). The Masaccio volume was referenced in relation to Reynolds's visit to the Carmine during his time in Italy in William Cotton, ed., *Sir Joshua Reynolds's Notes and Observations on Pictures* (London: John Russell Smith, 1859), a collection of Reynolds's writings containing,



Smiles suggests that Patch's work on Masaccio may have been the catalyst for Reynolds's lecture incorporating reflections on the same artist, delivered to the Royal Academy students in 1784. This, Reynolds's twelfth discourse, contains the only extended discussion of a 'primitive' artist; in the discourses, the formative literature of British artistic theory in the second half of the eighteenth century, Reynolds took as his exemplars those artists who reflected mainstream aesthetic taste, unsurprising when one considers that his audiences included aristocratic connoisseurs and patrons.<sup>88</sup> Reynolds qualified Masaccio's achievements historically in relation to those of Raphael and, although his praise of the earlier artist is not as extensive as that afforded him by Patch, Reynolds singled out a number of laudable elements of Masaccio's style.<sup>89</sup> This, perhaps, is also unsurprising given that the context of Reynolds's referencing of Masaccio is a defence, within the discourse of the artistic practice, of borrowing or imitation as developmental and emulative processes.<sup>90</sup> In comparing Reynolds's text with Patch's volume, it is apparent that there is a direct correlation between the Brancacci subjects analysed by Reynolds and those reproduced by Patch. Material evidence for this claim may be found in the library of the Royal Academy, which holds a loose, unbound collection of sixteen of Patch's Masaccio plates (without the accompanying textual introduction) - all of individual heads. If Patch's volume was indeed the sole visual source material used by Reynolds in his lecture preparation, then it was Patch's understanding and translation of Masaccio's achievements and stylistic merits that was disseminated by Reynolds in late-eighteenth-century Britain, and which were, in fact, inimical to Reynolds's own theoretical beliefs as expounded in the *Discourses*. For, as previously discussed, the heads demonstrate that Patch's representation of Masaccio's art focused on the depth and naturalness of his individual characterisation. Interestingly, though, Reynolds's personal response to seeing the Brancacci chapel himself thirty years prior to the occasion of his lecture shared clear similarities with Patch's later interests. Reynolds noted that Santa Maria del Carmine contained "A Chapel

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amongst other material, the excerpted written observations from two of Reynolds's Italian tour sketchbooks.

<sup>88</sup>Chapter 5 set forth an argument for Reynolds's theoretical position (in relation to the primitives, at least) being a reflection of that of his patrons.

<sup>89</sup>Compare "it will be sufficient to say that both Michelangelo and Raphael studied after [the Brancacci chapel frescoes] and that the latter even condescended to introduce some of those figures into his own compositions having besides learnt from Masaccio the surest method of varying his Characters by taking them from nature" (Patch, 1772, p. 3), and "Raphael, as appears from what has been said, had carefully studied the works of Masaccio; and indeed there was no other, if we except Michael Angelo, (whom he likewise imitated), so worthy of his attention; and though his manner was dry and hard, his compositions formal, and not enough diversified, according to the custom of Painters in that early period, yet his works possess that grandeur and simplicity which accompany, and sometimes even proceed from, regularity and hardness of manner." Reynolds, ed. by Wark, 1997, p. 218.

<sup>90</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 216-221.

Painted by Masaccio” and that “Raffiele[sic] has taken his Adam and Eve driven out of Paradise from hence, the heads according to the ancient custume[sic] are Portraits and have a wonderful character of Nature”.<sup>91</sup>

The first catalogue of the Royal Academy’s library was compiled in 1802, and it included *La Vita di Fra Bartolommeo*. This may have been gifted by an artist, but it also may have been purchased from one of the booksellers known to supply the institution; newspaper advertisements reveal that Mr. Randall of Pall Mall, whose premises were leased from the auctioneer James Christie (as were the Royal Academy’s), was selling the Fra Bartolommeo and Giotto volumes in 1773, and a year later Mr. Molini, who identified himself as bookseller to the Royal Academy, had some of the Ghiberti engravings for sale.<sup>92</sup> John Flaxman’s proposition in 1810 that the Academy purchase Patch’s book of engravings after the Ghiberti reliefs is further evidence of the importance accorded to Patch’s volumes in the immediate decades following their execution.<sup>93</sup>

A more wide-ranging reconstruction of Patch’s immediate and later audiences is afforded through the records of sale catalogues and the bookplates and inscriptions that survive in various copies of the volumes, and these throw up a host of both expected and unknown names. Established and supposed early owners were William Beckford (builder of the Gothic Fonthill Abbey and owner of multiple early Italian artworks, some of which ultimately went to the National Gallery), Count Leonardo Cicognara, a ‘Mr. Mounsier’ to whom Patch inscribed the copy of *La Vita di Masaccio* (bound with caricatures and other engravings) now in the British Museum, and Robert Udny, elder brother to the consul of Leghorn.<sup>94</sup> There are

<sup>91</sup>Reynolds, 1752, BMPL 1859,0514.305, f. 31v.

<sup>92</sup>*Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser*, Sat March 20th 1773, Issue 1194 and *Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser*, Mon Jan 31st 1774, Issue 1463 respectively.

<sup>93</sup>RA Council Minutes, IV, 236, 1810 August 13; recorded in the RA Library Catalogue of 1821. See Rhodri Windsor Liscombe, ‘The ‘Diffusion of Knowledge and Taste’: John Flaxman and the Improvement of the Study Facilities at the Royal Academy’, *Walpole Society*, 53 (1987) pp. 226-238.

<sup>94</sup>The provenance information for these four examples is as follows. Beckford: the Patch volume in the Pierpoint Morgan Library, gifted by Ken Clark in 1981, has a pencil note on the flyleaf identifying Beckford as a previous owner; his ownership of it could be identified with lot 1894 in the Philips’ auction catalogue of his library (*A Catalogue of the Magnificent, Rare and Valuable Library of Fonthill Abbey*, 1823), which reads “The Life and Works of Masaccio with the caricatures, folio”, although Patch’s name as author is not present. Cicognara: Count Cicognara (1767-1834) amassed a library on art, archaeology and related fields which he sold to the Vatican in 1823; his self-authored catalogue - *Catalogo ragionato dei libri d’arte e d’antichità posseduti dal Conte Cicognara* (Pisa, 1821) - contains two Patch listings, one for a Masaccio volume (seemingly alone) and the other for a Ghiberti one. Mr. Mounsier: British Museum 1854,1113.1. This individual is seemingly unknown and there are no other items in the British Museum connected to him. Udny: a Ghiberti volume is listed as lot 18 in the thirteenth day’s sale of his collection in London by T. Philipe, which began 26 May 1802. In this catalogue the volume is credited only to Patch, with no mention of Gregori.

three copies of Patch's engravings in the Victoria and Albert Museum and the National Art Library, one of which - a bound volume including Masaccio, Giotto and Fra Bartolommeo - has no provenance information beyond the date the museum acquired it.<sup>95</sup> The second was part of the Alexander Dyce bequest and is the Masaccio volume bound with that of Giotto (not, unusually, also including Fra Bartolommeo) and a single engraving of a bronze statue of Hercules. The latter is dated 1775 and is signed 'Gregori delin et Scul' in addition to the following inscription: "Ercole Da un Bronzo antico della medesima grandezza appresso Tommaso Patch".<sup>96</sup> The provenance information for the third is as limited as that of the first, but this copy - the Masaccio - is bound with the same series of other engravings as that at the British Museum, which was given directly by Patch to its recipient (Monsieur); both include twenty-five full-sized engraved caricatures signed and dated between 1768 and 1769, twenty-eight smaller caricatures and a series of plates after sixteenth- and seventeenth-century paintings in Florentine collections.<sup>97</sup>

Another recorded owner of some of Patch's engravings illuminates an additional facet of his influence in relation to early Italian art. The 1805 sale of the collection of books and prints owned by the portrait and history painter George Romney (1734-1802) included six plates "after Fra Bartolomeo, in aquatinto."<sup>98</sup> In January 1775, as part of a two-year Italian residence, Romney spent three weeks in Florence where records attest to his having met Patch. First, on 16 January Romney was introduced by Patch to copy unspecified paintings at the Uffizi.<sup>99</sup> Second, a note in one of Romney's sketchbooks reads "speak to the apothecary in Patch's name", prefaced by a reference to a painting by Fra Bartolommeo which suggests a recommendation by Patch (who of course had intended to engrave all of Fra Bartolommeo's extant paintings).<sup>100</sup> Importantly, both written and visual records document the fact that Romney also looked at primitives whilst in Florence,

<sup>95</sup>National Art Library, 66.E.10, acquired by the museum 2 November 1954.

<sup>96</sup>V&A DYCE.2804-2841. Underneath a newspaper cutting describing the Masaccio volume and pasted to the first folio is an inscription in ink reading "3-3-0 at Sotheby's, April 14 1866." Richard Redgrave, *DYCE COLLECTION. A Catalogue of the Paintings, Miniatures, Drawings, Engravings, Rings and Miscellaneous Objects Bequeathed by The Reverend Alexander Dyce* (London: South Kensington Museum, 1874) p. 269.

<sup>97</sup>One example is an engraving after a landscape by Gaspard Dughet identified on the plate as being in Horace Mann's collection. National Art Library, 66.E.36, acquired by the library 28 March 1868.

<sup>98</sup>*The Intire and Genuine Collection of Prints, Books of Prints and Drawings of George Romney*, Esq. T. Philipe, London, 22-23 May 1805, lot 10 (the second day's sale).

<sup>99</sup>Fabia Borroni-Salvadori, 'Artisti e viaggiatori agli Uffizi nel Settecento', *Labyrinthos*, 3 (1987) p. 127. Judging from a letter by Romney addressed to a fellow artist back in Rome, it seems that one of his primary requests was for Titian's *Venus of Urbino*, immensely popular with visiting artists and guarded closely by the Florentines. See John Romney, *Memoirs of the Life and Works of George Romney* (London, 1830) p. 188 for a transcription of the letter.

<sup>100</sup>Italian sketchbook, 1773, YCBA B1980.30. Inscribed on the verso of the flyleaf 'Geo. Romney June 5, 1773'.

and it is tempting to speculate, given their known connection, that Patch may have encouraged his interest in this direction.<sup>101</sup> There are two sketches by Romney annotated (identified as the artist's own hand) 'Cimabue'; one appears to depict the marriage of the Virgin and the other a scene of mourning (Figs. 69 and 70).<sup>102</sup> This accords with two letters written by Romney in which he informed his respondents - Charles Greville (1749-1809), the nephew of William Hamilton, and a 'Carter' who was a fellow artist in Rome, respectively - about his activities in Florence:

[In Florence] I met with great entertainment from the old masters, in particular Cimabue and Masaccio; I admired the great simplicity and purity of the former, and the strength of character and expression of the latter. I was surprised to find several of their ideas familiar to me, till I recollected having seen the same thoughts in M. Angelo and Raphael, only managed with more science.<sup>103</sup>

I was very much entertained, and I believe employed my time to greater advantage, in making sketches from the works of Cimabue, Masaccio, Andrea del Sarto, and Michael Angelo [sic].<sup>104</sup>

Andrea del Sarto and Michelangelo were the two artists referenced by Mann in his description, written in a letter of 1771 to Walpole, of Patch's engraving project.<sup>105</sup> Romney's exposure to and interest in "the simplicity of Cimabue's and Giotto's schools" was first highlighted by William Hayley and referenced again by the artist's son in his later counter-biography.<sup>106</sup>

Patch's volumes were also owned by collectors and connoisseurs whose names are synonymous with the interest in the primitives, such as William Roscoe, who

<sup>101</sup>Prior to his stay in Florence, Romney had spent approximately eighteen months in Rome where he was acquainted with the Fuseli circle. As Alex Kidson has demonstrated, much of Romney's time in Rome was spent in studying classical art and that of the High Renaissance with the aim, common to many artists of the era, of building a repertoire of sketches for future work (Alex Kidson, *George Romney*, exh. cat. (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2002), pp. 19-22 and p. 98). There have been no identifications of copies after early Italian art in the so-called Roman sketchbook, although there is a note relating to a painting by Masaccio at "St Clements ... belonging to the Irish Fryers[sic]" in the YCBA one, which presumably references the frescoes thought to be by Masaccio in that Roman basilica. Whether this note was made whilst Romney was still in Rome, and therefore pre-dates Patch, or whether it was a suggestion from Patch as something for Romney to look at at a later date is difficult to establish. Other notes on the same page relate to Florentine artworks.

<sup>102</sup>The former is on a leaf of Romney's Italian sketchbook now in the YCBA. The latter is in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. See Yvonne Dixon Romney and Alex Kidson, eds., 'The Romney Sketchbooks in Public Collections', *Transactions of the Romney Society*, 8 (2003).

<sup>103</sup>Letter written by Romney to Greville and dated Venice, February 29 1775. Romney, 1830) p. 114.

<sup>104</sup>Letter written by Romney to Carter, undated but also written from Venice. *Ibid.*, p. 118.

<sup>105</sup>Mann to Walpole, 22 February 1771 in Lewis, ed., vol. 23, 1967, p. 276.

<sup>106</sup>William Hayley, *The Life of George Romney, Esq.* (Chichester, 1809) p. 308. Romney, 1830, p. 102.

owned the engravings after Masaccio, Giotto and Fra Bartolommeo, and Alexander Crawford, Lord Lindsay (Masaccio, Giotto and Fra Bartolommeo, bound together).<sup>107</sup> All four of Patch's volumes were present in the library of Charles Eastlake, President of the Royal Academy and Director of the National Gallery, and in the latter role responsible for a significant influx of works by primitives into the national collection in the 1850s and 1860s.<sup>108</sup> Additionally, Samuel Rogers's sale catalogue of 1856 both indicates that he owned a complete set of Patch's engravings and includes a list of prices.<sup>109</sup> The relatively high price realised by the volume described as "Patch's Heads, after Masaccio and others" reflects the upward trajectory of value assigned the primitives during this period.<sup>110</sup>

Some of those names listed above reoccur in connection with another facet of Patch's influence on the British knowledge of and taste for Italian art. Patch's role as the seller, to Charles Townley, in a transaction which enabled the importation of the first known Trecento fresco fragments into Britain has been previously mentioned. It is not clear exactly where Townley kept these frescoes but, as Smiles recently demonstrated, they were exposed to a significant audience through Townley's connection with the Society of Antiquaries. Records attest to Townley having loaned the society (of which he was a member) his 'Giotto' fragment depicting a single female figure from the *Annunciation to San Zaccaria* along with the corresponding plate of Patch's publication in 1801 (Plate II).<sup>111</sup> Townley thought that the figure's "action would be best understood, when seen united with the Composition,

<sup>107</sup>Roscoe: Lot 1331 in the Roscoe sale of prints, painter's etchings, drawings, and paintings (eleventh day) 20 September 1816 - "Patch's Imitations of the pictures of Giotto, in twelve plates, of Masaccio, twenty-six, of Fra Bartolommeo twenty-four, half bound, Russia." Lord Lindsay: the copy now in the Ulrich Middeldorf Collection at the Getty Research Institute, which has a Bibliotheca Lindesiana bookplate.

<sup>108</sup>A full catalogue of Eastlake's library, sold by his widow to the gallery in 1870, was made and published by George Green in 1872, and this invaluable source has recently been digitised. See Susanna Avery-Quash, 'The Eastlake Library: Origins, History and Importance', *Studi di Memofonte*, 10 (2013) pp. 3-46 for a detailed analysis of the compilation of the library and the ways in which Eastlake made use of it as a resource.

<sup>109</sup>Lot 1636 in the Christie's sale of Samuel Rogers' library, seventeenth day, Friday May 16th 1856 - "Patch's Gates of San Giovanni, at Florence - h.-b.russ. Firenze 1774", and lot 1637 in the Christie's sale of Samuel Rogers' library, 17th day, Friday May 16th 1856 - "Patch's Heads, after Masaccio and others - calf Florence 1770". The poet Samuel Rogers (1763-1855) amassed a significant collection of primitives in the first half of the nineteenth century. He visited Paris in 1802 and Italy in 1815, owned purported Cimabues by the 1810s and had his house decorated by Stothard and Flaxman. John Hale, ed., *The Italian journal of Samuel Rogers* (London: Faber and Faber, 1956) is a useful source for Rogers's interests and activities particularly as they related to the visual arts.

<sup>110</sup>The Masaccio, Giotto and Fra Bartolommeo volume was bought by Lord Holland for 4-7-0. Interestingly, the buyer's name given for the Ghiberti volume is 'Patch, Esq.'.

<sup>111</sup>Smiles, unpublished conference paper, London March 2013. Gerard Vaughan, *The Collecting of Classical Antiquities in England in the 18th Century: a study of Charles Townley (1737-1805) and his circle*, vol. I., unpublished DPhil thesis (University of Oxford, 1988) pp. 197-198.

of which it formed a part".<sup>112</sup> His motivation for doing so was to afford the society's members the opportunity to examine such a specimen in light of the recent rediscoveries of frescoes in St Stephen's Chapel at the Palace of Westminster. Townley further offered the society "an undoubted Cimabue" from the collection of his friend Charles Greville. Greville, previously referenced in relation to Romney, formed a choice collection of paintings which included a small nucleus of primitives intended, as the description in the posthumous Christie's sale catalogue of 1810 elucidated, to illustrate "the restoration of the art of painting in Italy, and its subsequent progress to perfection."<sup>113</sup>

This historical event confers an awareness of and interest in the meaning and status of his frescoes on the part of Townley that has hitherto gone unnoticed. Townley travelled to Italy on three occasions, and his travel journal for the first of these trips contains an account of his visit to the Facciolati collection in Padua, known for its high proportion of works by primitives. Townley's comment that the collection was "all trash" has on more than one occasion been repeated as evidence that the connoisseur had no personal interest in early Italian art. This phrase has, however, been abstracted from a wider context and thus misrepresented. Townley in fact declared that the Facciolati collection was "*Except* a few Curious antient pictures, all trash", and questioned attributions of paintings to Mantegna.<sup>114</sup> Moreover, during the same stay in Padua, Townley recorded going to see the frescoes of Mantegna in the Eremitani and evinced a degree of appreciation for their style.<sup>115</sup> It is worth also mentioning in this context that, in addition to purchasing the 'Giotto' fresco fragments from Patch, there is also a record of Townley owning Patch's engravings after both the Ghiberti gates and Fra Bartolommeo's paintings.<sup>116</sup> Certainly the value of Townley's fresco fragments was recognised by others and, as with Patch's volumes of engravings, they also percolated through the collections of the significant names in the rediscovery of the primitives - Ottley, Roscoe and Rogers all owned one or more of the fragments at given points, as did Charles Greville. Unaccount-

<sup>112</sup>This quotation comes from the minutes of the Society of Antiquaries via Sam Smiles in direct communication.

<sup>113</sup>Sale catalogue for the collection of the Hon. Charles Francis Greville, Christie, Manson & Woods, London, 31 March 1810. Greville has remained a shadowy figure with regards to late-eighteenth-century British culture, despite his many artistic connections; for a brief discussion of his collecting activities see Francis Russell, 'Greville', *Grove Art Online*, Oxford Art Online. Oxford University Press, accessed June 5, 2012, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T034878>.

<sup>114</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 135. Italics are this author's.

<sup>115</sup>Townley wrote that "the paintings on the wall in fresco by Mantegna [are] in a plumper and Less Stiff Stile than he usual[sic] painted in." *Ibid.*

<sup>116</sup>"1773/Florence/December 4/Paid Mr Patch for the nine remaining numbers of the prints of St Jn Gates which he is to send to Mr Jenkins - 10.00/paid Ditto for the second no of his prints from a picture of the frate - 4." British Museum Townley Papers, No 3: Accts in France & Italy from 28. Octob: 1771, to 13 Feb: 1774.

ably, the ‘Giotto’ fresco fragment was attributed to Masaccio in the posthumous sale of Greville’s collection, although it was then re-identified as a Giotto by its subsequent owner, Samuel Rogers. As the Carmine fragment sold from Ottley’s collection in 1811 was still attributed to Giotto, presumably Greville himself ascribed his fragment to Masaccio, and it would be interesting to learn on what basis he made that judgement. According to the preface to the Christie’s sale catalogue of his collection, Greville acquired works on his own initiative, without the aid of a dealer or intermediary; another fresco in his collection, called ‘Head of an Angel’ and attributed to Giotto, was “selected by the late intelligent proprietor from authentic situations.” The presence of this other Giotto fresco in Greville’s collection could afford a possible explanation for the attribution of the Carmine fragment to Masaccio, as the primitives in this catalogue were listed in chronological order ranging from a so-called Cimabue to a Perugino.

To return to Townley’s loan of a ‘Giotto’ fresco to the Society of Antiquaries, however. Members of this institution would already have been familiar with the name of Patch, regardless of his residing in Italy for the majority of his career, as in 1771 the artist had engraved a *trompe l’oeil* fresco by Paolo Uccello (1379-1485) in the Duomo of Florence which depicted a marble monument to the English *condottiere* John Hawkwood (Figs. 71 and 72), which was presented to and then distributed by the society. Uccello’s evocation of a marble statue in the fresco means that there are not the same kinds of issues of translation and omission as raised by Smiles in the case of Patch’s copies of Masaccio’s frescoes, but this engraving - in which Patch cropped Uccello’s composition, focusing primarily on the Englishman’s face and upper body - is much more detailed and highly finished than those in the Masaccio volume. It is possible that this individual work represents an intended volume of engravings on the work of Uccello; as has already been shown, Patch copied the monument of Giotto in the Duomo and may at the same time have thought it expedient to copy this. Indeed, records suggest that Patch was not commissioned to produce the engraving by the Society itself. An inscription on the print itself and multiple accounts detail that the engraving was presented to the society by the judge and historian David Dalrymple, Lord Hailes, in 1775.<sup>117</sup> The Society then commissioned an account of Hawkwood’s life from Richard Gough in 1776.<sup>118</sup> It is possible that Dalrymple himself commissioned it directly from Patch at the suggestion of Horace Walpole, as in a letter to Dalrymple dated 22 January 1772 Walpole

<sup>117</sup>See, for example, ‘Hawkwood, Sir John’, *A New and General Biographical Dictionary*, ed. by William Owen and William Johnstone, vol. 6 (London, 1784) pp. 478-484 and ‘The First English General, Sir John Hawkwood’, *The Mirror of Literature, Amusement and Instruction*, vol. 26, no. 729 (London, July 11 1835) pp. 17-19.

<sup>118</sup>William Caferro, *John Hawkwood: An English Mercenary in Fourteenth-Century Italy* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007).

responded negatively to what appears to have been a request from his correspondent that he research Hawkwood's life, and another letter, written nine months later by Horace Mann to Walpole, included a copy of Patch's engraving.<sup>119</sup> The Society of Antiquaries republished Patch's engraving of the Uccello fresco in 1781, adding to the multiple copies of Patch's volumes of engravings already in public circulation.<sup>120</sup>

There is one final and significant addendum to this assessment of Patch's influence. Aside from the evidence, as sketched out in the preceding paragraphs, that those with an interest in early Italian art continued to seek out and purchase Patch's publications, the engravings gained the status of authoritative visual records through the reproduction of them by a Victorian writer whose name has long been synonymous with the propagation of early Italian art - Anna Brownell Jameson (1796-1860). Jameson has a secure place in the historiography of the primitives, and it has long been known that her attention was turned to the Italian primitives after reading Alexis Rio's *De l'art chrétien* (1836), a narrative of the development of art in which artists pre-dating Raphael were accorded the status of masters in their own right as opposed to mere forerunners.<sup>121</sup> Perhaps Jameson's greatest achievement in this arena was also her earliest, which was the series of essays commissioned from her and published between 1843 and 1845 for the *Penny Magazine*, the populist publication of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge.<sup>122</sup> Jameson's essays essentially comprise mini-monographs on the lives and works of important Italian artists ranging from Cimabue to Titian and the Venetian school, with the remit of introducing and educating a largely working-class readership to their merits. Her essay on Giotto, published in 1843, included an illustrative header of two angels (set against the portrait bust of Giotto also included as a plate in Patch's volume) which the author identified as having been taken from Patch's *La Vita di Giotto* (Figs. 73 and 74).<sup>123</sup>

The significance of Patch's actions in publishing copies after early Italian art and being a conduit by which authentic specimens of such art entered Britain continued to be recognised throughout the nineteenth century, meaning that writ-

<sup>119</sup>Lewis, ed., vol. 15, 1951, p. 132 and vol. 23, 1967, p. 428.

<sup>120</sup>John Fenn, *Three Chronological Tables: Exhibiting a State of the Society of Antiquaries of London* (London, 1784) p. 20.

<sup>121</sup>The influence of Rio's work on the interest in and understanding of early Italian art in Britain is extremely significant, though the relationship between the British exploration of such art sketched in this thesis and that which occurred amongst the French (and Germans and Italians) is out-with the bounds of this investigation.

<sup>122</sup>See Judith Johnston, 'Invading the House of Titian: The Colonisation of Italian Art. Anna Jameson, John Ruskin and the *Penny Magazine*', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 27 (1994) pp. 127-143.

<sup>123</sup>Anna Jameson, 'Essay on the lives of remarkable painters, no. iii Giotto', *Penny Magazine*, 12 (1843) p. 91.



ers thereby directed their readership to his volumes. Anna Jameson was unusual in going so far as to reproduce one of Patch's engravings, but many of her contemporaries followed her lead in referencing Patch's volumes and involvement with the 'Giotto' fresco fragments. Mrs Foster's translation of Vasari, for example, noted Patch's rescuing of the fresco fragments and highlighted the importance of his Ghiberti volume for its inclusion of the *arte de'fabbricanti* document.<sup>124</sup> An earlier, and perhaps particularly telling example, is Patch's inclusion in the second volume of Michael Bryan's dictionary of painters and engravers where, despite the dictionary's remit, there is no mention of either Patch's view paintings and caricatures but only a reference to the Masaccio volume.<sup>125</sup> Thus, as foreseen by Horace Walpole on the occasion of the artist's death, Patch primarily became identified with his pioneering efforts to make visual examples of the work of Italian primitives accessible to a wider audience.

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As this chapter has demonstrated, Patch's approach to reproducing both the 'Masaccio' and 'Giotto' fresco cycles and the Ghiberti reliefs exhibited a strong awareness of the primary role of reproductive prints as agents of cross-cultural exchange through their ability to transmit accurately the visible appearance of an artwork, which coincided happily with Patch's personal interest in physiognomy. Thus Patch used techniques such as cross-hatching and aquatint in his plates to evoke the colouristic qualities and approximate the effects of light and shadow in the original artworks. The replication of the illusionistic aspects of both painting and sculpture, so deeply embedded in pictorial reproduction tradition, began to be displaced towards the end of the eighteenth century by a new mode of illustrative and reproductive drawing in which the focus was almost exclusively centred on outline. The greatest exponent and indeed instigator of this style of drawing in Britain was John Flaxman, whose sources of inspiration have long been cited as the Roman sarcophagi he saw whilst in Italy and his consumption of the widely-disseminated engravings after Greek vases that proliferated at the end of the eighteenth century.<sup>126</sup> The publication examined in the following chapter has an entirely different approach to those of Patch regarding the replication of early Italian frescoes and

<sup>124</sup>Vasari, trans. by Foster, 1850, vol. 1, pp. 97, 376 and 382 respectively. A very recent examination of Foster's work has challenged the veracity of both her translation of Vasari and authorship of the editorial notes or annotations that allegedly illustrated her exegesis to the reader: Charles Davis, *Vasari in England: an Episode. Was Mrs. Foster a Plagiarist?* (Fontes: E-Sources and Documents for the History of Art 1350-1750, 2013) <http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/artdok/volltexte/2013/2179>.

<sup>125</sup>Michael Bryan, *A Biographical and Critical Dictionary of Painters and Engravers*, vol. 2, (London, 1816) p. 173.

<sup>126</sup>See David Bindman, ed., *John Flaxman 1755-1826: Master of the Purest Line* exh. cat., (London: Sir John Soane's Museum, 2003).

clearly evidences the influence of Flaxman's outline drawings. As Patch's Masaccio volume was the first published record after the Brancacci chapel frescoes, so too was the *Description of the Chapel of the Annunziata dell'Arena; or, Giotto's Chapel, in Padua* by Maria Callcott (with illustrations by her husband, Augustus Wall Callcott) the first published record of an equally important monument of early Italian Renaissance art.

## Chapter 7

# Sir Augustus Wall Callcott and the First Illustrations after Giotto's Arena Chapel

[Callcott] painted everything tolerably, and nothing excellently; he has given us no gift, struck for us no light, and though he has produced one or two valuable works ... they will, I believe, in future have no place among those considered representative of the English School.<sup>1</sup>

John Ruskin's withering assessment of the nineteenth-century landscape painter Augustus Wall Callcott (Figs. 75 and 76) was an inevitable consequence of his strong preference for Callcott's contemporary, J.M.W. Turner, particularly coming as it did in the third edition of *Modern Painters* (1846).<sup>2</sup> Callcott died in 1844, and so was spared the humiliation of being described as an artistic non-entity by the man rapidly becoming the foremost art critic of the nineteenth century. It is not the object of this chapter to evaluate the impact of Ruskin's assessment on the reputation of Callcott, but the last sentence of the above quotation was certainly prophetic, if not causal. Despite enjoying a long and distinguished career in which he frequently garnered much greater accolades than Turner, with only three exceptions Callcott has, since his death, merited only the briefest of references in surveys of nineteenth-century British art or school of landscape painting.<sup>3</sup> These generally

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<sup>1</sup>John Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, 3rd ed., vol. I (London, 1846) p. 93.

<sup>2</sup>It is widely accepted that, from its inception, *Modern Painters* was conceived by the author as a robust defence against the widespread criticism that had been levelled at Turner by multiple critics. What distinguishes the third edition of the work from the first and second, however, is its tone. Although there was a difference of less than five years between the publication of the first and third editions of the first volume, the criticisms in the third edition that are levied against Turner's contemporaries, many of whom were friends of Ruskin's father, are absent in the first and second editions.

<sup>3</sup>Perhaps the most memorable comparison drawn between the two artists was that made in *The*

follow the same pattern: following a brief biography, his major works are cited and the conclusion is drawn that he was a mere follower - even at times pasticheur - of Turner. Such a reductive analysis has severely diminished the importance of a man who was admired by both his artistic peers and the leading connoisseurs of the early nineteenth century for his knowledge, judgement and taste, and who stood for President of the Royal Academy in 1830.<sup>4</sup> Although he failed to garner the requisite number of votes, his merit was recognised by Queen Victoria and, more significantly in the context of this thesis, Prince Albert, when Callcott was knighted in 1837 and subsequently given the coveted position of Keeper of the Royal Collection.

The monographic literature on Callcott comprises only two works.<sup>5</sup> The first is James Dafforne's *Pictures by Sir Augustus Wall Callcott, R.A., with a Biographical Memoir* of 1875, which is primarily distinguished by the lack of information about its subject. The biographical sketch that Dafforne provided of Callcott is in essence a compilation of the obituaries of the painter published in the *The Athenaeum* and *Art-Union*, which Dafforne may himself have written in the first place.<sup>6</sup> Other material he cites as having consulted includes Charles Robert Leslie's *Autobiographical Recollections*, published in 1860, and Richard and Samuel Redgrave's *A Century of Painters* of 1866. A number of the factual errors made by Dafforne, particularly in relation to Callcott's continental tours, can most likely be attributed to the fact that the vast majority of primary material relating to the painter seems to have remained with his descendants until the latter half of the twentieth century.<sup>7</sup> Dafforne

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*Times* in 1836, where it was stated that "to look at Callcott's "Trent in the Tyrol" after Turner's "Mercury and Argus" is as cool and refreshing as iced champagne after mulligatawny." Quoted in David Blayney Brown (hereafter referred to as Brown), *Augustus Wall Callcott*, exh. cat. (London: Tate Publishing, 1981) p. 45. A further comment on Callcott's lack of longevity is the fact that he does not appear in any edition of Pilkington's *A General Dictionary of Painters*. He was, however, the subject of a British Institution retrospective in 1845.

<sup>4</sup>This point is laboured time and time again in the literature on Callcott; see his obituaries in *The Athenaeum* (30th November 1844) pp. 1098-1099 and *The Art-Union*, 7 (1845) p. 15.

<sup>5</sup>There is also a solely graphic record of Callcott's work: Thomas C. Dibdin, *Sir Augustus Wall Callcott's Italian and English Landscapes. Lithographed by T.C. Dibdin* (London, 1847).

<sup>6</sup>James Dafforne (1803/4-1880) joined the staff of the Art Union in 1845 (Callcott died in November 1844, and his obituary in that publication appeared in 1845) and was a contributor to it for thirty-five years. He wrote a number of 'Lives' of Victorian artists, including C.R. Leslie, Turner and Landseer.

<sup>7</sup>It would seem, however, that Dafforne did make an effort to find this material; when writing about Callcott's continental tours, he stated that he knew that Callcott had "visited continental countries on more than one occasion, and yet it does not appear that he left behind him any records of any kind concerning the people with whom he associated or the places he visited." Dafforne, 1875, p. 18. It is by no means certain as to how hard Dafforne looked, but one would presume that an assiduous biographer would have approached his subject's great-nephew, the painter John Callcott Horsely (1817-1903). The material now kept by the Bodleian and the Courtauld, comprising the Callcotts' honeymoon journals amongst other correspondence, came from the collection of Mrs. Nancy Strode, Callcott Horsley's granddaughter. Thus it would seem as though Callcott Horsley had no interest in sharing his uncle's material with Dafforne, a supposition seemingly supported by the fact that Dafforne's biography is not mentioned in Callcott Horsley's own memoirs, the

did, however, perceptively write about the peculiarity of the paucity of references to Callcott in the published lives of his contemporaries, such as those of Turner, Constable, Leslie and Etty, to name but a few: “this seems almost inexplicable, considering the position Callcott occupied among his brother-artists, and the universal respect in which he was held by all who were acquainted with him.”<sup>8</sup> Perhaps one explanation for this lies with Callcott’s character (most reports of him highlight his taciturnity) and the - by all accounts - quite serious recurring illness that seems to have plagued the last fifteen years of his life.<sup>9</sup>

The sole twentieth-century published study of Callcott and his *oeuvre* is an exhibition catalogue by David Blayney Brown (derived from the monographic doctoral thesis on Callcott by that author), which constitutes the first and only serious modern attempt to evaluate and assess Callcott’s work.<sup>10</sup> The exhibition comprised only seventeen works by Callcott, but Brown’s primary aim was to spotlight Callcott’s relationship with Turner and, consequently, add to the existing understanding of the artistic *milieu* within which Turner operated. This methodological framework, combined with Brown’s analysis of the primary material then at the Ashmolean Museum (now in the Bodleian Library), offers an infinitely more scholarly and complete account of Callcott’s life and career. However, despite his knowledge of the Bodleian travel journals, even Brown largely overlooked one of Callcott’s most interesting artistic projects, as have the majority of scholars of the revival of interest in the Italian primitives.<sup>11</sup> This is the co-publication with his wife Maria in 1835 of the concise but, importantly, first English account of Giotto’s frescoes decorating the Arena Chapel at Padua.<sup>12</sup> This is perhaps a more surprising omission in the scholarly literature given that a wealth of contextual primary information survives, and has been in the public domain for the past thirty years. The aim of this chapter

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*Recollections of a Royal Academician* (London, 1903).

<sup>8</sup>Dafforne, 1875, p. 18

<sup>9</sup>For instances of Callcott’s taciturnity, see Redgrave and Redgrave, 1866, p. 376 and John Callcott Horsley, 1903, p. 25. Callcott’s wife, Maria, referred in her journal to a serious illness during the couple’s stay in Venice in 1828 that appears to have indisposed Callcott for a number of days, and there are brief references to his ill-health in the autobiographies of Wilkie and Leslie.

<sup>10</sup>See note 3.

<sup>11</sup>However, Brown himself stated that the exhibition was unashamedly biased towards Callcott’s artistic production prior to his marriage and his artistic relationship with Turner. He did, however, devote two chapters of his doctoral thesis - David Brown, *The Life and Work of Sir Augustus Wall Callcott, RA (1779-1844)*, unpublished Ph.D. Thesis (Leicester, 1979) - to Callcott’s marriage, the honeymoon and the remaining period between those events and his death, in which the Giotto publication is discussed, but not fully analysed. The other significant piece of scholarship on this Callcotts’ honeymoon and related artistic activities is an introduction to a microfilm edition of Maria’s four honeymoon journals, co-authored by Brown and Christopher Lloyd: David Brown and Christopher Lloyd, *The Journal of Maria, Lady Callcott, 1827-8* (Oxford: Oxford Microform Publications, 1981) pp. 1-16.

<sup>12</sup>Brown referenced the Giotto publication as the fruit of Maria Callcott’s honeymoon, but there is no recognition of her husband’s contribution to the work. Brown, 1981, p. 16.

is therefore to offer an analysis of the Callcotts' *Description of the Chapel of the Annunziata dell'Arena; or, Giotto's Chapel, in Padua* (hereafter referred to simply as *Description*) and the source material from which it derived. It will then attempt to situate the Callcotts' publication within the matrix of other works on the primitives in the early decades of the nineteenth century and to assess its impact or influence on contemporary and later artistic responses to early Italian art.

## Callcott as a young man: hints towards an appreciation of the primitives?

Callcott was born in 1779 and, judging by his own recollection, found his childhood environment a formative influence in relation to his future career: "in every room of [his family] house were to be found prints after the best masters ... tolerable oil copies from the Dutch and Flemish masters. There was also a considerable number of works by the best English authors."<sup>13</sup> By 1797 he had enrolled as a student at the Royal Academy and was concurrently training in the studio of the portrait painter John Hoppner. As Brown states, and as is indeed frequently the case with British artists of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, very little is known about Callcott's time as a student, beyond the subjects and reception of those works he submitted to the exhibitions. Since Brown's researches in 1981, however, some (incomplete) records of both library and school attendance at the Academy have been donated to the institution's library, and these offer a window into Callcott's attendance patterns.<sup>14</sup> This is by no means an entire picture though as, in addition to the records being incomplete within themselves, many of the books are missing a number of signatures which have been cut out (undoubtedly those of Turner and possibly Constable). What can be gleaned is that Callcott's name appears most frequently in the attendance book of the library and not at all in those of the Life Academy, and he seems to have particularly frequented the Academy in the final months of each year.<sup>15</sup> This could be explained by professional commitments;

<sup>13</sup>"Fragments of family history written by Sir Augustus Wall Callcott a few years before his death in 1844" in William Hutchins Callcott's hand, undated, Bodleian, MS. Eng. d. 2267. Callcott was the son of Thomas Callcott, a builder in Kensington, and his second wife Charlotte, née Wall. His elder brother was John Wall Callcott (1766-1821), the celebrated organist and composer.

<sup>14</sup>These records are those of student attendance in the Antique Academy, Life Academy and Library: RA/KEE/2/1, RA/KEE/2/2 and RA/KEE/2/3 respectively.

<sup>15</sup>Callcott's library visits were few enough to allow transcribing them here, though it must be noted that only one library attendance book exists in the RA archive (spanning the period 11th March 1799 to 06th October 1807). 1799 [begins with a couple of entries for March and then jumps to July]: July 22nd; October 21st; October 28th; November 4th 18th and 25th; December 2nd, 9th and 16th. 1800: January 13th [only entry for this year]. 1801: [no entries; library was closed between Oct 19th and Jan 12th 1802 for the new Catalogue and classification of the books to take place]. 1802: October 18th; November 15th, 22nd and 29th. 1803: [no entries but only goes up

the pre-existing relationship between Callcott's family and the occupants of nearby Holland House meant that Callcott was fortunate in enjoying influential patronage from an early stage in his career, and indeed the nature of landscape painting in itself meant that most artists working in that genre travelled during the summer months.<sup>16</sup> Regardless of his attendance pattern, what is of interest is the nature of the material Callcott was consulting in the library. Although no records to this effect were kept, and thus we cannot build an individual picture of Callcott's interests at the time, the earliest surviving catalogue of the library's collection gives some indication as to what was available to him during his formative years as a student. The list of relevant illustrations included, as has been detailed in the previous section of this thesis, copies both close and remote - in both temporal and stylistic senses - from their original thirteenth-, fourteenth- and fifteenth-century source material.<sup>17</sup>

According to Brown, drawing was not a particular preoccupation of Callcott's.<sup>18</sup> However, his ambitions towards landscape painting were allegedly inspired by seeing Stothard's illustrations to Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, first published in 1790 (Fig. 77). According to his first biographer, Callcott was "accustomed to say that Stothard's charming designs illustrating "Robinson Crusoe" mainly induced him to change his practice [from portraiture to landscape painting]."<sup>19</sup> This appreciation of Stothard's drawings is significant in the context of the reception of early Italian art in Britain at the turn of the nineteenth century. Like the infinitely more famous Flaxman, who became a close and life-long friend, Stothard's drawings are characterised by their linear, austere style, which led to comparisons being made between his work and that of the early Italian painters. William Hilton, upon seeing Giotto's Arena Chapel frescoes on his visit to Italy in 1825, wrote to his sister that the aesthetic similarities between them and "Stothard's design" led him to imagine that the latter could have "formed himself upon this early painter's works", and Leslie recounted in his memoirs an instance when Turner allegedly referred to Stothard as "the Giotto of England".<sup>20</sup> Marcia Pointon notes that for

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to March]. 1804: [only one entry for the entire year - A.W.C.'s name not present]. 1805: October 21st. 1806: [no entries for A.W.C.]. 1807: [no entries for A.W.C.]. The book is then reversed and there are entries spanning January 1801-6. 1801 and 1802: [No entries for A.W.C.]; 1803: October 31st; November 7th, 14th and 21st; December 19th [signs himself as Mr Callcott; all previous entries were signed as A.W. Callcott]. 1804-6: [no entries for A.W.C.].

<sup>16</sup>See Brown, 1981, pp. 11-15.

<sup>17</sup>*A Catalogue of the Library in the Royal Academy* (London, Holborn, 1802).

<sup>18</sup>In a follow-up article to the 1981 Tate exhibition of Callcott's work, Brown states that very few works on paper by Callcott had come to light since the aforementioned exhibition, reaffirming Brown's belief (first expounded in the exhibition catalogue essay) that drawing ceased to be a significant preoccupation for the artist after 1803. David B. Brown, 'Further Pictures by A.W. Callcott', *Turner Studies*, 10, issue 2 (1990), pp. 34-39.

<sup>19</sup>Dafforne, 1875, p. 17.

<sup>20</sup>Quoted by Marcia Pointon in 'The Italian Tour of William Hilton, R.A. in 1825,' *The Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 35 (1972), pp. 339-358. Pointon rather dismissively referred

early nineteenth-century artists and connoisseurs Stothard's drawings facilitated an appreciation of the Italian primitives, although she entirely disagrees with the idea that there were visual analogies between early Italian art and that produced by Stothard. Her initial portrayal of the artist is also significant, as the description could be equally applicable to Callcott: "[Stothard was] one of those artists whose name perpetually crops up in association with more celebrated figures: artists like Blake, Flaxman or Fuseli."<sup>21</sup>

The connection between Callcott and Stothard, his elder by twenty-two years, deepens further upon Callcott's first journey outside of Britain. The Bodleian holds two journals in Callcott's hand relating to a visit he made to Paris in September 1814, which constitute the earliest known records of travel outside his home country.<sup>22</sup> The turbulence generated by the Napoleonic wars would have been a decisive factor in Callcott's delaying of what could be termed a rite of passage for young artists seeking to widen their exposure to the visual arts of the past.<sup>23</sup> Callcott's journals are frustratingly uninformative as to his hopes and intentions for the trip, as well as the decision-making behind the itinerary, but the fact that the Musée Napoléon (later to become the Musée du Louvre) by 1814 contained a plethora of Italian treasures led many travellers to the conclusion that widening the scope of their trip to include Italy, as had traditionally been the case, was unnecessary.<sup>24</sup>

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to Stothard as "at best a very mannered artist whose works are full of sentiment and sweetness", concluding that Hilton must have been thinking of Stothard's drawings when this comparison came to mind. Leslie, 1860, p. 87. Interestingly, the authors of a catalogue entry for Turner's *Boccaccio Relating the Tale of the Bird-Cage* seem to have shared Pointon's view concerning the inanity of comparing Stothard with Giotto, suggesting that Leslie must have misheard Giotto for Watteau. Martin Butlin and Evelyn Joll, *The Paintings of J.M.W. Turner*, rev. ed. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1984).

<sup>21</sup>Marcia Pointon, Review [of Shelley M. Bennett, *Thomas Stothard: The Mechanisms of Art Patronage in England circa 1800* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1988)], *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, 22 (1980), pp. 135-136.

<sup>22</sup>The literature on the subject seems to have rendered opaque the date of Callcott's visit to Paris. In one of the Bodleian diaries (MS. Eng. d. 2264) Callcott gives his journey as beginning on August 31st 1814. Furthermore, Joseph Farington recorded a dinner with William Owen on Friday 29th October 1814 as follows: "Owen had been five weeks in Paris, a party consisting of Col. and Mrs Ainslie, - Callcott and Mr Kinnard, and Architect, son of Mr Kinnard the Magistrate." Joseph Farington, *The Diary of Joseph Farington*, ed. by Kenneth Garlick and Angus Macintyre, vol. 13 (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984) pp. 4598-4600. (Mr Kinnard is presumably William Kinnard, the architect who travelled in 1817 to Greece with Charles Eastlake, who became a great friend of Callcott's wife). However, Brown repeatedly states (in his entries for Callcott in the online editions of the Grove Dictionary of Art and the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, in addition to the 1981 Tate exhibition catalogue) that Callcott visited Paris in 1815. This is compounded by the Oxford DNB entries for those who Callcott writes of associating with in the city - those of Chantrey and Stothard state that they visited Paris in 1815, rather than 1814.

<sup>23</sup>Callcott also, as previously alluded to, seems to have been kept busy by the high level of patronage in England he enjoyed during the early years of his career, which was only enhanced by the glowing reviews that his submissions to the RA exhibitions in the first decade of the nineteenth century elicited.

<sup>24</sup>As the future RA President Martin Shee commented upon the occasion of his own visit to Paris



Visiting the museum is certainly a common event in Callcott's journal. However, as he offered no written opinions of the works he saw there, we have recourse only to an overall impression of the gallery recorded by Farington: "[Callcott] thought the Galleries at Paris afforded a fine opportunity for comparing the works of art of the different schools, but He approved their being restored to their former situations" (Friday 13th October 1815).<sup>25</sup> The fact that Callcott did not record having seen any works by artists who pre-dated Raphael, despite presumably having seen the nucleus of early Italian art looted under the instructions of Dominique Vivant-Denon, suggests that his comparing of the "different schools" meant the schools of different countries, rather than any reflections on the characteristics of the different Italian schools.<sup>26</sup> However, to return to Stothard - Callcott noted in his diary the time spent "look[ing] over the statues [in the gallery] with Chantry [sic]".<sup>27</sup> This was Sir Frances Chantrey, the sculptor, who had travelled to Paris with Stothard. There is no mention of the latter artist in Callcott's travel journal but, as it seems to have been the case that Callcott and his party socialised within a wide circle of English acquaintances in Paris, it is tempting to construct a narrative around the two artists discussing the works of art of the schools that they were able to see first-hand in the unparalleled Parisian galleries. Indeed, the Christie's Sale Catalogue of Callcott's collection (May 8th 1845) reveals that he owned over eighty drawings by Stothard (Fig. 78), and auction house records testify to his continued interest in the elder artist, as Callcott bought two allegorical drawings by Stothard on 19th July 1836 at Christie's.<sup>28</sup>

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during the brief Peace of Amiens in 1802, "Italy is now in Paris." Martin Archer Shee Jr., *The Life of Martin Archer Shee*, vol. 1 (London, 1860) p. 251.

<sup>25</sup>Farington, vol. 13, 1984, p. 4718. The early Italian collection in the Louvre was extremely wide-ranging. The Cimabue *Maesta* from Pisa is the work most commonly cited in accounts of the Napoleonic looting, but Callcott could also have seen Giotto's *St Francis receiving the Stigmata*, a *Coronation of the Virgin* by Fra Angelico and Uccello's *Battle of San Romano* in addition to works by Simone Martini, Botticelli and Piero della Francesca.

<sup>26</sup>Callcott listed works by traditionally esteemed masters (such as Raphael, Titian and Rubens) that he saw on different occasions whilst in Paris, but tended not to offer descriptions or critical judgements (Augustus Wall Callcott, 'Diary of a visit to Paris', Bodleian MS. Eng. d. 2265). Conversely, he set down often quite discursive judgements of artworks seen in the studios of his French contemporaries, including David and Gros. His attitude towards early-nineteenth-century French painting was largely dismissive; he called David's style "abominably theatrical", describing it as executed "feebly" and "not a hundredth part as good as West". With this last comment, Callcott seems to almost have been a mouthpiece for the views of his old master, John Hoppner: "In the preface [to *Oriental Tales*, an 1805 publication of verses by the artist], Hoppner justified his own style and method of painting - which had often been criticized as unfinished - in contrast to the contemporary French school, in particular the work of J. L. David and Elisabeth Vigée Le Brun (the latter then working in England), and which he savaged." John Wilson, 'Hoppner, John (1758-1810)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn. May 2011 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13764>, accessed 29 May 2011].

<sup>27</sup>Bodleian MS. Eng. d. 2265, f. 24v

<sup>28</sup>Getty Provenance Index Sale Catalogue Database, Lots 0087 and 0091 from Sale Catalog Br-14002.

In addition to the potential influence of Stothard as a friend and an artist, Callcott mixed within a circle that included a number of individuals who then, or later, evinced an interest in early Italian art. The poet Samuel Rogers was one, as was Callcott's Royal Academy colleague Thomas Uwins. William Dyce, the *soi-disant* British Nazarene, became a close friend in the early 1820s, despite the substantial age difference between the two artists. Furthermore, a note surviving in the Callcott Papers in the Courtauld Institute testifies to an acquaintance with William Young Ottley, a crucial figure particularly in the locus of the widening of the audience for early Italian art. Written in Maria Callcott's hand, the note records the Callcotts' wish to consult Ottley (misspelt 'Otley' by Maria) regarding the edition of Dante's *Divine Comedy* illustrated with engravings after designs by Botticelli (Fig. 79).<sup>29</sup> Without journals or epistolary evidence pre-dating Callcott's late-in-life marriage in 1827, it is impossible to offer a authoritative account of his engagement with earlier styles and periods of art than that defined by the omnipresent Raphael, but this short exposition has endeavoured to demonstrate that it was accessible to him in a multiplicity of forms - through the interests of his friends, through the archaising works of those he both admired and would have encountered under the auspices of the Royal Academy and, of course, first-hand.

## The Career and Interests of Maria Graham.

The multiple journals kept by Callcott during his extended honeymoon in Italy, Germany and Austria constitute the earliest evidence of a sustained aesthetic interest in early art - Italian, German and Flemish. Names such as Giotto, the Lorenzetti, Altichiero, van Eyck and Cranach (amongst many others generally absent from equivalent contemporary literature) occur with marked frequency in Callcott's notes. What is particularly interesting is that this statement also applies to the journals of the artist's new wife, who was an extremely well-educated and travelled woman with an established interest in the visual arts. Where, then, did the interest in primitives, which is so evident in their respective journals, come from? To answer this question it is necessary to offer a brief biographical sketch of the woman who countered the "general [supposition that] Callcott was so wedded to his art that he cared not to enter upon the state of matrimony", before analysing the Callcotts' respective journals so as to form a picture of the nature of their appreciation of

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<sup>29</sup>The note reads: "Sandro Botticelli's Dante - Engraved by Baccio Baldini and published in 1488 - to enquire of Otley [sic] about it. It was printed at Florence by Nicholo[sic] Lorenzo della Magna in 1481 according to Bryan. Botticelli himself engraved - according to Vasari - 12 plates of Sybils - 7 of the Planets - a St Jerome before a Crucifix - St Sebastian with the Virgin. 37 are there in existence."

early art.<sup>30</sup>

Maria Dundas (Fig. 80) was born in 1785, and lived what could easily be termed a rather unconventional life for a woman at the turn of the nineteenth century.<sup>31</sup> As a child, her experiences were fairly traditional. However, that she was educated at a boarding school in Oxfordshire managed by the Misses Bright, who were part of the Strawberry Hill circle, and had a succession of teachers in different disciplines including William Crotch (1775-1847), a celebrated musical prodigy, and William Delamotte (1775-1863), a landscape artist and pupil of Benjamin West's who encouraged her to read Reynolds's *Discourses* and Burke's work on the sublime, is worth mentioning in the context of her later interests.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, holidays were spent at the Richmond house belonging to her uncle Sir David Dundas, where she met artists, writers and intellectuals including (again) Samuel Rogers and Sir Thomas Lawrence, who would later paint arguably the most iconic portrait of her (Fig. 81). However, it is Maria's life between 1808 and 1826 which has deservedly attracted a significant amount of scholarly attention. At the age of twenty-three she married a navy lieutenant, Thomas Graham, and spent the next two years accompanying him during his service in India.<sup>33</sup> This experience provided the catalyst for Maria Graham's life-long career as a writer, and she carved somewhat of a niche for herself in publishing wide-ranging accounts of countries and cultures that were not traditionally within the sphere of the 'lady travel writer'; indeed, she was the first English woman to write about both Brazil and Chile. Thus she published *Journal of a Residence in India* in 1812, *Letters from India* in 1814 and both *Journal of a Residence in Chile during the Year 1822; and a Voyage from Chile to Brazil, in 1823* and *Journal of a Voyage to Brazil and Residence there during part of the Years 1821, 1822, 1823* in 1824.<sup>34</sup> That this last work was vied over by London's

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<sup>30</sup>Dafforne, 1875, p. 20.

<sup>31</sup>The most complete account of her life is that given by Rosamund Brunel Gotch who, being the daughter of John Callcott Horsley and therefore a descendant of her subject, had unparalleled access to family papers: Rosamund Gotch, *Maria, Lady Callcott, the Creator of Little Arthur* (London: John Murray, 1937). However, the familial link and the date at which it was written means that it should not be regarded as a wholly unbiased nor all-encompassing source. The first section of the biography is a typescript of Maria's own unpublished and unfinished reminiscences (Bodleian MS. Eng. d. 2282); as Maria lived another six years following their dictation to her close friend Caroline Fox it is mysterious that they remain incomplete.

<sup>32</sup>Maria's description of Strawberry Hill leads one to wonder how much of an influence it had on her later taste: "Everybody who reads pleasant books knows the name of Horace Walpole, and everybody who has read his letters and remains, or rather his collected works knows the name of Miss Berry the editor ... By their [the Misses Berry's] favour I saw Strawberry Hill till I knew its contents by heart, could fancy the picture stepping out of its frame that suggested the famous scene in the Castle of Otranto, admired the ancient portraits by Holbein and others, and was too great a novice in antiquarian matters to be able to separate the worthless nick-nacs from the really curious things with which Strawberry Hill abounded." Bodleian MS. d. 2282, f. 63.

<sup>33</sup>Maria's first marriage lasted twelve years. Thomas Graham died of a fever in 1822 whilst captaining a ship in South America.

<sup>34</sup>Critical literature on these publications includes: Maria Graham, *The captain's wife: the South*

two biggest publishers, Murray and Longman, illustrates the fame and respect Maria had achieved as a writer by this point.<sup>35</sup>

Of particular interest in Maria's early literary career is her first art-historical work. In 1818 Captain Graham and his wife sailed to Italy on the HMS *Ganymede*. Significantly, their arrival in Italy was preceded by a short stop in Malta where they became acquainted with the young Charles Eastlake, who was later to be so involved with the fortunes of the National Gallery and the interconnected drives to improve public art and art education. The Grahams then lodged at number 12 Piazza Mignanelli in Rome where Eastlake had his studio, which in turn led to the three making a trip to Poli together in the summer of 1819. This excursion formed the basis of yet another piece of travel literature by Maria - *Three Months Passed in the Mountains East of Rome* (1820), for which Eastlake supplied six illustrations. As Maria attested in the preface to this work, Eastlake, though young, was already well-known as an artist and thus did not need an introduction from her: "Mr C. Eastlake is too well known as an artist to need the praise of the writer, who certainly could not give it without partiality".<sup>36</sup> However, a letter written by Maria to John Murray in February 1821 did introduce Eastlake as an artist as well as an intellectual and a writer and exhorted Murray to admit him to his "morning levées", revealing that she played no small role in advancing his career. Murray published, seemingly upon Maria's recommendation, a translation by Eastlake from an Italian text entitled *Memoirs of the Secret Societies of the South of Italy, particularly the Carbonari* that same year.<sup>37</sup>

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*American journals of Maria Graham 1821-23*, ed. by Elizabeth Mavor (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1993); Jennifer Hayward, "'The Uncertainty of the End Keeps Up the Interest': Maria Graham's Journal of a Residence in Chile as Life Writing", *A—B: Auto—Biography Studies*, 17 (2002) pp. 43-64; Maria Graham, *Journal of a residence in Chile during the year 1822; and, A voyage from Chile to Brazil in 1823*, ed. by Jennifer Hayward (Charlottesville, Va. and London: University of Virginia Press, c. 2003).

<sup>35</sup>Periods spent in London and Edinburgh in the 1810s had led to Maria's making the acquaintance of John Samuel Murray (1778-1843) and his family, a relationship which was extremely profitable both personally and professionally. She became godmother to one of Murray's daughters, and there is an extensive correspondence between Maria and Murray spanning over thirty years in the Murray archive at the National Library of Scotland (Ms.40185 and Ms.40186). For Murray she published the English translation of *Memoirs of the Wars of the French in Spain* in 1815 (originally written in French by M. de Rocha, "an Officer of the Hussars, and Knight of the Order of the Legion of Honour") as well as many other works, and she was engaged as a reader and translator for him until her death. See, for the Murray publishing house, Humphrey Carpenter, *The seven lives of John Murray: the story of a publishing dynasty, 1768-2002*, ed. by Candida Brazil and James Hamilton; with additional material by James Hamilton (London: John Murray, 2008).

<sup>36</sup>Maria Graham, *Three Months Passed in the Mountains East of Rome* (London, 1820) p. vii.

<sup>37</sup>Maria's letter to Murray about Eastlake is quoted in David Robertson, *Sir Charles Eastlake and the Victorian Art World* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1978) p. 19. According to the letter, the book was originally written by a Baron Bartholdy; in the English translation, however, both he and Eastlake as the translator remain anonymous.

In 1820, the same year that *Three Months...* was published, so too was Maria's first piece of art-historical scholarship, the *Memoirs of the Life of Nicholas Poussin*. This was the first biography of the artist to appear in English and the timing of such a change in the author's professional interests cannot have been coincidental. The bulk of what is quite a substantial work (over two hundred pages) must have been written whilst Maria was in Italy, and one wonders how much Eastlake influenced it; Poussin was, of course, the great history painter of the seventeenth century, and Eastlake had strong pretensions to the same vocation.<sup>38</sup> Unfortunately no documentation survives to shed further light on the conception and genesis of the project, but the tone of the somewhat polemical preface and the thorough methodology adopted in the cataloguing of Poussin's *oeuvre* could be interpreted as redolent of an artist's approach to writing a life of a painter, rather than an historian's or, worse, a novelist-manqué's.<sup>39</sup> Maria herself testified publicly to the benefit of Eastlake's acquaintance in the continuation of her acknowledgement of his participation in *Three Months*, writing that she could not "resist the opportunity afforded by the publication of these pages, of testifying the sincere regard of both his fellow-travellers, and their gratitude for the additional enjoyment his taste and his knowledge enabled them to derive from their residence in Italy."<sup>40</sup> Her use of the word 'taste' in this sentence is particularly interesting in the context of one of the aims of this chapter, which is to establish how, when and why Maria Callcott and her second husband developed an interest in early Italian art. In his pioneering work on the multi-faceted nature of aesthetic taste, *Rediscoveries in Art*, Francis

<sup>38</sup>The entry in the online *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* for Eastlake makes it very clear that, as a young man, he had confident opinions: "In December [1808, Eastlake] informed his father that he had decided to become a historical painter and wished to begin artistic studies at once." David Robertson, 'Eastlake, Sir Charles Lock (1793-1865)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8414>, accessed 4 June 2011]. Eastlake also related in his autobiographical memoir the tale of his choosing Poussin's *Vision of St Paul* to copy whilst visiting the Louvre in 1815. Charles Eastlake, *Contributions to the Literature of the Fine Arts*, vol. 2. (London, 1870) p. 48.

<sup>39</sup>The preface of Maria's volume on Poussin almost reads as a call-to-arms to British artists. It asserts the superiority of the contemporary British school in no uncertain terms whilst simultaneously implicitly criticising the current state of patronage. This in itself was not new in the discourse concerning the visual arts in Britain, but Maria used Poussin as an almost motivational tool, exhorting British artists to continue in their endeavours in the face of seeming public indifference, and also to recognise the artistic independence that such indifference afforded. The real attention to detail by Maria when it came to cataloguing Poussin's known works (i.e. the wealth of detail regarding the patrons, geographical locations and copies of his paintings), at the expense of the more traditional anecdotal-style artist biography, could be seen to reflect more artistic concerns. This also accords with James Northcote's proclamation that "if ever there should appear in the world a Memoir of an Artist well given, it will be the production of an Artist." Quoted in Karen Junod, *Writing the Lives of Painters: Biography and Artistic Identity in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) p. 1. It is instructive to compare, in this context, Maria's work on Poussin with the heavily-romanticised biography of Salvator Rosa published by Lady Morgan only four years later.

<sup>40</sup>Graham, 1820, p. vii.

Haskell wrote that it seemed to him “beyond doubt that much of the inspiration for [Eastlake’s] outstanding connoisseurship in the field of early Italian art derived from Lady Callcott’s imaginative and continuing guidance.”<sup>41</sup> Brown later reinforced the idea that the Callcotts’ interest in the primitives strongly influenced their younger friend.<sup>42</sup> It seems, however, that given the absence of references to art in general prior to Maria’s visit to Italy (notwithstanding the mentions of reading art theory as an adolescent, as these are given no special emphasis in her recollections of her wide-ranging education), the influence may have run in the opposite direction.<sup>43</sup> Eastlake’s journals and correspondence from his first years in Rome reveal that he had a strong connection with the Nazarenes through his friendship with Carl Bunsen, and it is tempting therefore to conjecture that exposure to this circle may have sparked Maria’s interest in the Nazarenes’ art and ideas and then, by extension, the original art from which they derived their inspiration.<sup>44</sup>

The deep friendship which developed in Rome between Maria and Eastlake - she wrote of Eastlake to Francis Palgrave that “there [were] few people [she] love[d] half so well in the world” - endured throughout both their lives, although this is by no means accurately reflected in the paucity of surviving sources. Certainly Maria’s marriage to Eastlake’s fellow Academician Augustus Wall Callcott in 1827 can only have served to reinforce their connection and opportunities to socialise.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, as Haskell claimed, there were strong parallels between the Callcotts and the later partnership of Eastlake and his wife, the writer Elizabeth Rigby: “After [Maria’s] death and that of her husband (in 1842 and 1844), their roles as joint arbiters of taste were assumed by her one-time protégé Eastlake and his wife, the

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<sup>41</sup>Haskell, 1976, p. 93.

<sup>42</sup>David Blayney Brown, ‘Callcott.’, *Grove Art Online*, Oxford Art Online, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T013183pg1> (accessed June 5, 2011).

<sup>43</sup>In a recently published survey of all three significant members of the Eastlake family (Charles, Elizabeth and their nephew Charles Lock Eastlake), Susanna Avery-Quash and Julie Sheldon also suggested that Haskell’s conceptualisation of the Eastlake-Callcott relationship may need reversing, but focused on Eastlake’s influence on Maria’s understanding and knowledge of the English school and its associated issues, such as problems of patronage. Susanna Avery-Quash and Julie Sheldon, *Art for the Nation: The Eastlakes and the Victorian Art World* (London: National Gallery Co., 2011) p. 26.

<sup>44</sup>Undoubtedly still the most important piece of literature in English on the Nazarenes is Andrews, 1964. Eastlake also published an essay in the *London Magazine* in 1820 which discussed the recent work of the Nazarenes.

<sup>45</sup>Quoted in Gotch, 1937, p. 172. The extent of Callcott’s relationship with Eastlake prior to his marriage is unknown. Although Eastlake lived in Rome for sixteen years, a country Callcott had not visited (Eastlake was in fact the first artist to be elected an associate of the Academy in absentia), he had been a student at the RA schools for the five years following Callcott’s election. It certainly would have been easy - given the pervasiveness of the Royal Academy network - for the two men to keep track of one another’s professional careers in the interim period, and Eastlake’s return to London in 1830 as a newly-elected full academician would have ensured that they would have mixed frequently both professionally and socially.

formidable Elizabeth Rigby, whose combined advocacy of the primitives was far more persuasive than that of the Callcotts had been.”<sup>46</sup> The veracity of Haskell’s statement regarding the efficacy of the Callcotts’ efforts concerning the re-evaluation of the primitives is undeniable, but it must be noted that their endeavours took place largely in the private rather than public sphere, unlike those of the Eastlakes. Moreover, the implications of Haskell’s use of the word “combined” will be returned to later in this thesis in as far as it relates to a major point made by Brown in his examination of the Callcotts’ interest in early art. However, equally undeniable is the fact that the Callcotts were a formidable partnership, counting leading artists, intellectuals and politicians amongst their friends and, during the 1830s and the early years of the following decade, presiding over arguably the most important artistic salon of the era. It is one of the contentions of this chapter that the reason that the Callcotts have been so little studied in the history of art is because their joint achievements (and particularly the publication after Giotto’s Arena Chapel frescoes) were almost immediately overshadowed by the far more public endeavours of the Eastlakes.

## The Marriage of Augustus Wall Callcott and Maria Graham

Judging by the diaries, journals and correspondence of both Maria and Augustus, their marriage was one of deep respect and mutual pleasure in their joint endeavours, the first of which was the extended honeymoon of 1827-1828. Despite a multitude of common acquaintances - not least of which was Turner, whom Maria had met in Rome in 1819 and with whom, as Brown definitively demonstrated, Callcott’s *oeuvre* is inextricably linked - the earliest known potential acquaintance between the painter and the author may have occurred in 1820, facilitated by Thomas Lawrence.<sup>47</sup> In her study of Maria’s residence in South America (the period 1822-1825, the years

<sup>46</sup>Haskell, 1976, pp. 93-94. This point was made earlier by Thomas Boase in his survey of nineteenth-century British art: “Like the Eastlakes later, it was a couple that the Callcotts played so great a part in the art life of their day.” Thomas Boase, *English Art, 1800-1870* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959). There are more literal parallels too. Both marriages occurred later in life, when all the parties concerned had well-established careers, and both men were, of course, artists, but both women also shared the same career, being writers and commentators on the visual arts.

<sup>47</sup>A letter in the archive of the Royal Academy written by Graham to Lawrence asking him and Callcott to dine has a date of 1820 derived from a pencil annotation (RA/LAW/3/211). Contradictory, however, is a note in Callcott’s hand preserved in the miscellaneous section of the Bodleian Callcott papers (part of a number of folios with biographical notes concerning Maria). Callcott recorded (writing about himself in the third person) that “on the 20 of Nov 1825 we find [Maria] in England again and in April 1826 Mr Callcott again renewed his acquaintance with her which had been begun at Lord Da[vies] table during [...] the few months she was in England the previous year.” Bodleian MS. Eng. c. 2733, folios 9-18.

immediately following Thomas Graham's death), Anya Marchant refers to a letter dated 2nd November 1826 in which Maria informed her friend and confidant the Empress Leopoldine of Brazil of her upcoming marriage to Callcott, confiding that her husband-to-be "had loved her for a long time and she was tired of living alone in the world."<sup>48</sup> It is by no means an understatement, however, to suggest that their engagement came as a surprise - and a not altogether welcome one - within their respective circles. Maria's own family allegedly thought Callcott unsuitable due to his "humble origins."<sup>49</sup> Although Maria (by her own account) defended her choice of spouse against such claims, the wife of Lord Holland, one of Callcott's most important patrons, suggested conversely that pedigree was very important to Maria: "Poor Callcott is to marry the intrepid Mrs. Graham ... It vexes all his friends for she will quite sink him, being a most determined lady and as proud as Lucifer of her family and connections. Besides, she has not a penny, probably debts, a bad prospect for him, poor man."<sup>50</sup> Lady Holland was certainly not alone in her unfavourable opinion of Callcott's fiancée, and Maria continued to attract censure throughout the remainder of her life.<sup>51</sup> It is not the aim of this chapter to defend Maria's character, but the point remains to be made that there were just as many favourable accounts of her as those unfavourable ones which seem to have dominated the literature concerning her life and career.<sup>52</sup> Interestingly, despite the disapproval the marriage announcement elicited from some, those who were happy for the couple included Turner and David Wilkie.<sup>53</sup> Undoubtedly, both men looked beyond

<sup>48</sup> Anya Marchand, 'The Captain's Widow: Maria Graham and the Independence of South America', *The Americas*, 20 (1963), pp. 127-142. Marchand cites the letter that she referred to as having been transcribed in *Correspondencia entre Maria Graham e a Imperatriz Dona Leopoldina et cartas anexas* (Rio de Janeiro, 1940). The letters were apparently originally written in English and French.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 142.

<sup>50</sup> Lady Holland to an unidentified friend, January 1827, reproduced in Giles Holland Fox-Strangways, Earl of Ilchester, *Chronicles of Holland House* (London: John Murray, 1937) pp. 107-108.

<sup>51</sup> Nineteenth-century attitudes towards intellectual women were, partly, shaped by the eighteenth-century reaction against 'bluestockings'. See Elizabeth Eger and Lucy Peltz, *Brilliant women: 18th-century bluestockings*, exh. cat. (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2008) for an analysis of eighteenth-century attitudes towards bluestockings conducted through the prism of visual representations of them.

<sup>52</sup> Ironically, one of Maria's closest friends following her second marriage was Caroline Fox, Lady Holland's sister-in-law by marriage. Lady Holland was herself no stranger to controversy, having abandoned her first husband to have a child with and later marry Henry Richard Fox, Third Baron Holland, and faking the death of one of her children from her first marriage so as to not have to give her up. C. J. Wright, 'Fox, Elizabeth Vassall, Lady Holland [other married name Elizabeth Vassall Webster, Lady Webster] (1771?-1845)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10028>, accessed 23 July 2011].

<sup>53</sup> Wilkie had known and been impressed by Maria since 1817, according to his *Life* by Cunningham. In November 1826, he wrote to Thomas Phillips: "Amongst the news you give me, nothing has pleased me more than the report of the proposed marriage of our excellent friends Callcott and Mrs Maria Graham, both so deserving of the happiness which the married state may justly be supposed to give ... I suppose we shall see the two out in Italy before the spring - the follower and



concerns such as status and saw only that the couple's intellects and interests were complementary.

What may seem rather undue emphasis on the circumstances surrounding the Callcotts' marriage is necessary when one considers that, with the exception of the honeymoon journals, there is no known evidence relating to the conception and execution of the Giotto publication. Thus it is incumbent upon any analyst of the work to attempt to draw conclusions regarding the dynamic of the Callcotts' marriage as pertaining to this, and other, joint endeavours. Some twentieth-century accounts of Maria suggest that she was the dominant force in the partnership; as such interpretations exhibit a strong bias towards the unfavourable nineteenth-century accounts previously alluded to, this is implicitly a negative construction, considering the gender and social norms of the period.<sup>54</sup> Brown's characterisation of Maria as being, essentially, a mercenary social climber, for example, is surely an extension of the very evocative description of her 'salon' by the Redgraves.<sup>55</sup> In their account, a sharp contrast is drawn between her behaviour and that of Callcott: "[Lady Callcott] was somewhat imperious in her state chamber; the painter being more of a silent listener, until some incident of travel, some question of art, roused him up to

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the historian of Poussin." Andrew Cunningham, *The Life of Sir David Wilkie*, vol. 2 (London, 1843) p. 371. Turner wrote to Holworthy: "Callcott is going to be married to an acquaintance of mine when in Italy, a very agreeable bluestocking." John Gage, *Collected Correspondence of J.M.W. Turner* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980) p. 103.

<sup>54</sup>In his account of Callcott's life and work in the Oxford *Dictionary of National Biography*, Brown writes that "Callcott's later years were both dominated, and somewhat eclipsed, by his wife." Although it is not necessary to go into detail about the unfavourable accounts of Maria dating from her lifetime, it is worth mentioning that the majority, if not all of them, come from other women, whereas both male and female acquaintances recorded her positive attributes. See, for an example showcasing Maria's good qualities, Fanny A. Kemble, *Records of a Girlhood* (New York: Cosimo, 2007) (reprint of the original 1878 edition), pp. 506-507. Maria was no doubt considered an oddity by certain members of her own sex, given her experiences and profession, but that surely does not excuse what can only be described as malice directed at her in the autobiography of Harriet Martineau (written in 1855 but first published in 1877), in which the author accused Maria in no uncertain terms of causing her husband's death: Callcott's "tenderness of heart appeared in that devotion to his wife which cost him his health and his life ... one could not, after all allowance for [Maria's] invalid state and its seclusion contrasted with former activity, help regretting that her far superior husband should sink prematurely into melancholy and ill-health, from his too close attendance upon her, through years of hot rooms and night watching. A higher order of wife would not have permitted it; and a lower order of husband would not have done it." Harriet Martineau, *Autobiography*, Linda Peterson, ed. (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2007) p. 276. This opinion first appeared in Callcott's obituary in the *Athenaeum*. Whilst undoubtedly caring for Maria had an adverse effect on Callcott's health, the blame heaped on her in both accounts is unfair, if only for the fact that it did not take into account the fact of Callcott's 'weak constitution' pre-dating their marriage.

<sup>55</sup>Brown discusses the pre-Academy private viewings that Callcott held in his house during the 1830s, suggesting that although "for the invention of which Callcott is generally credited ... one suspects that the idea was probably Maria's ... These were glittering events, of which Maria was probably stage-manageress, and Callcott ... the urbane master-of-ceremonies ... Reading Maria's later journals, one senses the acquisitive gleam in her eye as she lists the visitors on these occasions". Brown, 1979, pp. 150-151.

earnest interest or wise remark.”<sup>56</sup> Regina Akel, in a recent analysis of Maria’s literary works, vehemently disagrees with such interpretations, claiming, rather, that the trajectory of the writer’s career was strongly shaped by her marital statuses.<sup>57</sup> Only during her widowhood, suggests Akel, are Maria’s writings unguarded and not stifled by social conventions: when it comes to the honeymoon journals, “the narrator’s style and voice ... are affected by her marital status; apart from bowing to the authority of Augustus Callcott as her husband, she is forced to admit his superior standing as an artist. It is probable that none of the pronouncements on the paintings she sees are her own”.<sup>58</sup> This entirely negates the evidence of Maria’s Poussin monograph and the multitude of references in her correspondence with John Murray regarding art and art-historical literature.<sup>59</sup> The salient point, however, is that it seems more likely that the relationship between Maria and Augustus was infinitely more balanced than has been suggested by many of the opinions referenced here, if not necessarily entirely equal. Certainly, there are examples in Maria’s honeymoon journals of what are clearly independent aesthetic judgements. This is further borne out by an unpublished and very brief manuscript journal written by Maria in July 1833 of a visit to Cambridge.<sup>60</sup> Here she had arranged to meet her husband and the eminent German art historian Johann David Passavant, with whom the Callcotts had first become acquainted in Germany in 1827. Their second day in Cambridge was spent visiting the Fitzwilliam Museum and Maria recorded her thoughts regarding a number of attributions, even questioning Passavant’s judgement on one occasion: “Holbein’s portrait of the Earl of Suffolk Southampton and the picture called Albert Dürer certainly not his & as surely of the lower German or ancient Flemish school. The architecture is like that in the little Mabuse at Vienna. Some of the arrangements remind me of Schoonl. Mr Passavant talks of Lucas van Leyen [sic]. Is it not too good?”<sup>61</sup> Passavant also recorded the Fitzwilliam visit in the published diary of his travels in England; much of what he wrote about the museum accords with Maria’s account, although he did not mention the so-called Dürer. In

<sup>56</sup>Redgrave and Redgrave, 1866, p. 376.

<sup>57</sup>Regina Akel, *Maria Graham: A Literary Biography* (New York: Cambria Press, 2009).

<sup>58</sup>Akel, 2009, p. 225. This publication is based on Akel’s doctoral thesis (University of Warwick, 2009). As the title infers, Akel’s study of Maria was made within the framework of comparative literature and, furthermore, indicates that the main focus of the work is on Maria’s productivity during her first marriage.

<sup>59</sup>There are other failings in the conclusions that Akel draws regarding Maria’s character and particularly her role on the Callcotts’ honeymoon. It is puzzling that Akel only cites one manuscript (out of the four extant) directly relating to the honeymoon in the Bodleian.

<sup>60</sup>Bodleian MS. Eng. d. 2733.

<sup>61</sup>*Ibid.*, folios 3-5. The only Dürer recorded in William Hazlitt’s catalogue of the pictures in the Fitzwilliam (*Criticisms on Art* (London, 1844) Appendix I, no. 93, p. 388) is an *Annunciation*. If this is the Dürer referenced by Maria, then her inklings regarding the similarities with Mabuse’s work were perceptive, as it is now attributed to Bernart van Orley with a date of c. 1517. See Horst Gerson, *Catalogue of Paintings in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge: Vol I, Dutch and Flemish* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960) p. 39.

the same publication, Passavant praised both Callcotts highly for their friendship and talents, relating that their “friendly interest was as beneficial, as their society was instructive to my plans.”<sup>62</sup>

Thus it was widely recognised by their contemporaries that Maria and Augustus Wall Callcott had complementary interests, and that they contributed equally in intellectual terms to their joint partnership. Based on Callcott’s preface to the Giotto publication, however, Brown suggests that the enthusiasm for the Italian primitives (and by implication therefore the idea to publish an account of Giotto’s Arena Chapel frescoes) came more from Maria than her husband. Callcott’s statement, and particularly the caveats contained within it regarding his copies of the frescoes, will be examined in greater detail later in this chapter. Donata Levi’s research into the dealer and antiquarian Carlo Lasinio, whom the Callcotts met and spent a great deal of time with in Pisa, could further support this hypothesis. Levi convincingly argued that the majority of the original early Italian paintings sold in the Callcott sale of 1845 (lots 399-414, Figs. 82 and 83) were (presumably joint) purchases made during their honeymoon, rather than evidence of an interest in the primitives on Callcott’s part that pre-dated his marriage.<sup>63</sup> Lasinio asked, on Callcott’s behalf, for permission to export “the below-listed bits of paintings: fragments on wood of the first fathers of the fine arts”; the thirteen ‘fragments’ listed by Lasinio correspond, Levi demonstrated, with thirteen of the sixteen early Italian works in the Callcott sale catalogue.<sup>64</sup> As previously noted, however, Callcott was part of an artistic circle that included - in addition to connoisseurs such as Samuel Rogers and William Young Ottley - painters such as David Wilkie, Thomas Phillips and William Hilton, all of whom strongly expressed appreciation for the Italian primitives in the early to mid-1820s, and thus it is difficult to qualify the extent of his interest in the primitives in relation to Maria’s.<sup>65</sup> Brown further argues that

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<sup>62</sup>Johann D. Passavant, *Tour of a German Artist in England*, translated Elizabeth Rigby, vol. 2. (London, 1836) p. 61. The RA copy of Passavant’s monograph on Raphael, published in 1839, came from the Callcott bequest of books to that institution; the front end-paper of the first volume is inscribed ‘Sir Aug. Wall Callcott der Verfasser.’

<sup>63</sup>This is based on a letter written by Lasinio to Antonio Ramirez de Montalvo, the Director of the Uffizi, in April 1828. Brown was unsure of the ownership of these early works: *op. cit.* note 12, p. 137. A copy of the sale catalogue in the Frick collection archive is annotated with buyers names. Bentley, an agent who worked for Prince Albert, bought a Filippino Lippi fragment seemingly on behalf of Wynn Ellis, who later bequeathed the work to the National Gallery. Other buyers included Colnaghi, Morand, Dilke and Grundy. The letter cited by Levi is in the Archivio di Soprintendenza Florence, Filza LII, p. II, ins.49 (Levi, 1993).

<sup>64</sup>“li sottoscritti Quadretti: fram[m]enti in tavola de’Primi Padri dell’Arti Belle”.*Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup>These three artists are discussed in greater depth later in this chapter for their particular relevance to the publication of the Callcotts’ volume on Giotto, but Phillips, for example, exhorted students to look carefully at the works of the long-neglected early Italian masters when Professor of Painting at the RA in the 1820s. Thomas Phillips, *Lectures on the History and Principles of Painting* (London, 1833) p. 51.

Callcott's "presumed aloofness from the more whole-hearted enthusiasm of Maria" was indicative of the difference in their professions, and that many artists at the time were simultaneously drawn to, but also wary of, the practical implications of admiring medieval and early Renaissance art.<sup>66</sup> This issue is further obfuscated by the fact that Maria's journals are, in the main, written in prose and are therefore much more descriptive than those of Callcott from the same trip, which are largely written in note and/or list form, and thus it is easier to extrapolate fully-formed opinions and demonstrations of taste from the former. It is this collection of journals to which this chapter will now turn, in order to pave the way for a detailed analysis of the Giotto volume.

## **The honeymoon of 1827-1828 - discovering ancient and modern primitives.**

Whilst this chapter is concerned with the Callcotts' publication after an early Italian artist and monument, the experiences of the couple during the first part of their honeymoon, which took them through Germany, Bavaria and Austria, are of particular importance in relation to their unusual aesthetic interests. The majority of material quoted comes, through necessity, from Maria's journals, of which there are four in total for the year-long trip (the Callcotts left England on 12th May 1827, and returned in mid-June 1828). These were numbered chronologically by the author. The first two cover the journey from England through the Netherlands, Germany and Bavaria, and the thrust of the remaining two journals is the Italian portion of the tour. These are much larger, and therefore less numerous, than those kept by Callcott; his journals are generally pocket-book sized and there are twenty-one in total. Maria's journals are written in ink, and contain the occasional sketch or diagram. Annotations in pencil are in Maria's hand, and there are also some interleaved notes and sketches of pictures. Callcott's journals, by contrast, primarily comprise lists and sketches of paintings seen during the tour, and are largely written in pencil. Given the almost consistent discrepancy in writing material between the two sets of journals, and as Maria often refers to her husband's notes in her own journals, it seems likely that Callcott took his notebooks along on their daytime excursions to jot down notes and record views and artworks on the spot and that Maria then used his notes to write lengthier, more descriptive accounts of their activities when time allowed. From the general tenor of Maria's journals it would appear that most judgements and opinions were shared by husband and wife (other than when she explicitly indicated that this was not the case), often having been arrived at following exhaustive joint study. The pronoun 'we' occurs extremely fre-

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<sup>66</sup>Brown, 1979, p. 166.

quently. Furthermore, as these opinions are repeated in another manuscript in the Bodleian written in Maria's hand, which probably constitutes the first chapter of a version of both sets of travel journals intended for publication, we can safely assume that Maria's voice is largely that of her husband's also.<sup>67</sup> Of particular importance is the fact that the couple's journals survive in different archives; whilst Maria's, as previously mentioned, were given to the Ashmolean Museum by descendants in 1980, those of Callcott (now in the Courtauld Institute Library, acquisition details unknown) were unknown to Brown and Lloyd when they published the microfilm edition of Maria's journals in 1981.<sup>68</sup> This chapter, therefore, constitutes the most complete analysis of the Callcotts' honeymoon thus far, and the study of Augustus Wall Callcott's Courtauld journals adds another layer to the discussion of the joint Giotto publication of 1835.

The itinerary followed by the Callcotts - (broadly) the Netherlands, Germany, Bavaria, Austria-Hungary, Italy and finally France - has been described as "unusual, and part of their scheme to study the art of the earlier centuries in [Italy and Germany]."<sup>69</sup> There is certainly ample evidence in Maria's journals to support the idea that the Callcotts particularly prioritised early art in the planning of their tour, as will be demonstrated, which seems to contradict the idea that Callcott did not exhibit the same level of enthusiasm about such work as his wife; a year is surely a long time to spend looking at, sketching and discussing artworks about which one is ambivalent. First, the majority of the many meetings with artists and connoisseurs who played significant roles in the revival of interest in the primitives must have been pre-arranged, and indeed letters of introduction were involved at times. Second, scholarly works dealing with the primitives (Ottley's *The Italian School of Design* (1823) and the only recently-published plates after the "most eminent masters of the early Florentine school", and Seroux d'Agincourt's *Histoire de l'Art* (also 1823), for example) were invoked fairly frequently; it is possible that some of these were taken by the couple on their trip.<sup>70</sup> Finally, almost no destination was left without at least one piece of medieval or early Renaissance art having been commented on, whether a work which they had prior knowledge of or one stumbled across.<sup>71</sup> The

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<sup>67</sup>Bodleian MS. Eng. d. 2280.

<sup>68</sup>The information, or rather lack of information, regarding the provenance of these latter manuscripts was communicated to the author from the Special Collections department of the Courtauld Institute Library via email.

<sup>69</sup>Brown and Lloyd, 1981, p. 7.

<sup>70</sup>Both works are listed as part of Callcott's library in the sale of his books and prints, which took place in May 1845. Christie, James, *A Catalogue of the Library of works on art and elegant literature, and prints and books of prints of Sir Augustus W. Callcott, deceased...* (London, 13-15 May 1845).

<sup>71</sup>For example, early on in the tour the Callcotts stopped in Oberwesel on the way to Mainz with the intention of seeing a picture by Drepenbeck; however, as Maria recorded: "we were misdirected and the evening being wet we did not like to go back half a mile. The church we did go into however

first reference to a primitive painting in Maria's journal is early on in their trip and appears to be an example of the former, as she cited the opinion of Aloys Wilhelm Schreiber, the author of the guidebook (*The Traveller's Guide Down the Rhine*) she and Callcott were using at the time.<sup>72</sup>

The 11000 virgins are great favourites of course at Cologne but the three kings or wise men of the East are the patrons of the City ... a ... memorial of them is an ancient picture which the sacristan says is by a Philipe Calef or Calf but which Schreiber says is Anonymous. It appears to have been placed in the town house in 1410 & four centuries exactly afterwards sent to the Cathedral. It opens & on the out side of the doors or shutters are Mary & the Angel both very beautiful. Within, the Center [sic] piece is occupied by the virgin & child the kings &c, & one side door by St Ursula & her holy company & the other by St Gereon & his knights. How the Colognese have made St George out of either the knight Gereon or Bp. Gero I know not but the keeper of the Cathedral certainly seemed to confuse those three worthy persons. The ground of this picture is gold & the figures come out hard upon it yet there is very great beauty & grace in some of the heads. A says that parts appear to have been repainted such as a piece of coloured cloth behind the virgins[sic] head - if not the virgin & child themselves.<sup>73</sup>

A postscript added later further elucidates Callcott's judgement on the painting in question, reading: "He said this on account of the roundness of the heads. We afterwards saw an undoubted antique picture at Coblenz apparently by the same hand in which there was the same roundness."<sup>74</sup> From the description of the altarpiece given by Maria, the work is indubitably the triptych *Patron Saints of Cologne*, dated c. 1440-1445. This has, since the mid nineteenth century, been linked with the name Stefan Lochner and still graces the 'Altar of the Patron Saints' in Cologne Cathedral.<sup>75</sup> The term 'ancient' seems to have been a flexible one for Maria, and

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contained three very old pictures presented to the church in 1506 but said to be of an earlier date. They all possess considerable some degree of merit but one containing a series of fifteen subjects called the end of the world is deserving of more attention from the skill it evinces in composition for the period at which it was painted. The actions are particularly expressive of the feelings they are intended to represent & the combinations of the groupes are natural. The conception of the painter has evidently been strong & of the execution of the picture had [...] [...] proportion to the talents all conception it would have been a picture of [...] entitled to rank higher than many pictures of considerable reputation." Journal of a tour by Lady Callcott to Dresden, Munich and Milan, 1: 12 May-9 Aug. 1827, ff. 11v-12r, Bodleian MS. Eng. d. 2275. This author has thus far been unable to trace either the church or paintings.

<sup>72</sup>The Callcotts were presumably using the most up-to-date edition: Aloys Schreiber, *The Traveller's Guide Down the Rhine* (Paris, 1825).

<sup>73</sup>Cologne, May 18th 1827, Maria Callcott, Journal I, f. 5.

<sup>74</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup>See Johann Jakob Merlo, *Nachrichten von dem Leben und den Werken Kölnischer Künstler*,

the objects and sites to which she attached it span centuries.<sup>76</sup> If it seems somewhat strange that she designated paintings by both a fifteenth-century German artist and the thirteenth-century Giotto ‘ancient’, it may perhaps be excused by the fact that her understanding of the evolution of German painting was undoubtedly influenced by her art-historical schooling, and particularly Vasari.<sup>77</sup> Furthermore, if the rediscovery of the Italian Trecento and Quattrocento was, by the mid-1820s, still by no means a wide-spread phenomenon, that of early German, Flemish and Netherlandish art was even less advanced, and although Karel Van Mander’s *Schilder-Boeck* (Antwerp, 1604) is now often considered the Northern European equivalent to the *Lives*, in the nineteenth century it was not read anywhere near as widely as Vasari.<sup>78</sup> Callcott, given his friendship with John Linnell, would have been highly likely to have seen original early Northern art prior to his honeymoon in the collection formed by the German merchant Karl Aders in London, but the lack of scholarly attention devoted to German, Flemish and Netherlandish art meant that many of the works in the Aders collection were unidentified or misattributed.<sup>79</sup> Thus it seems fair to assert that any pre-existing level of connoisseurship of early Northern European art cultivated by the Callcotts would not have been particularly high, and certainly lower than their knowledge of the Italian primitives.<sup>80</sup> This contention is reinforced by evidence in Maria’s first journal illustrating that it was their knowledge of early Italian art that facilitated the Callcotts’ understanding and appreciation of its Northern counterpart. Writing about the Dürer *Assumption of the Virgin* altarpiece, which they saw in the Staedel gallery in Frankfurt, Maria commented that it had “some features which would make me suppose it the work of a later period, such as making coloured shadows to a white drapery somewhat after the style of Masaccio.”<sup>81</sup>

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*Köln* (Leipzig: Schwarzenberg & Schumann, 1852) p. 1183.

<sup>76</sup>A sample of places and things called ancient included the amphitheatre at Verona, a stone bridge over the river Mosel and the cathedral at Torcello, in addition to artworks spanning, roughly, 1100-1450. The most frequent occurrences of the appellation ‘ancient’ are in relation to architecture.

<sup>77</sup>If one were to apply the Vasarian framework for the Italian Renaissance to German art, Lochner falls in the middle of the ‘adolescence’ period.

<sup>78</sup>For a recent and thorough account of the rediscovery of the Northern primitives, see Jenny Graham, *Inventing Van Eyck* (Oxford: Berg, 2007).

<sup>79</sup>As was also often the case with early Italian art, dealers unsurprisingly strongly favoured those recognisable names in the history of art when it came to giving artworks attributions for sale; the names van Eyck, Dürer and Memling were conferred on almost anything displaying certain Northern characteristics. See (in addition to Graham, 2007) Michael Joseph, ‘Charles Aders: a biographical note’, *Auckland University College Bulletin*, 43/6 (1953), pp. 1-44.

<sup>80</sup>The Callcotts’ relative ignorance concerning early Northern art is perhaps most effectively alluded to by Maria herself. When discussing one of a number of meetings with Sulpiz Boisserée, she wrote that he was “anxious to make us feel and know the difference between the High and Low Dutch schools.” *Journal I*, pp. 60-61.

<sup>81</sup>*Journal I*, ff. 18r-18v. The central panel of the altarpiece, depicting the Assumption, is in fact a copy of Dürer’s original, which burnt in a fire of 1674. The copy was executed by Jobst Harrich in 1614.

The sheer volume of material preserved in the archival collections of the Royal Academy is testament to the fact that improving their familiarity with Northern European art was a very real concern for the Callcotts during their tour.<sup>82</sup> On visiting the small picture gallery in Mainz, which did not have a catalogue, Maria broke off from her narration to insert into her journal one that they had compiled themselves, though stipulating that they had decided to only include those works they thought had merit and, of those, indicating ones they thought to be of questionable attribution.<sup>83</sup> This connoisseurship quickly reached serious heights, manifesting itself in a series of catalogues (separate from the journals) of the many collections they saw. Whilst the location of these detailed catalogues is now unknown, a multitude of hang diagrams, with varying levels of descriptive annotations, were donated to the Royal Academy by descendants in the 1930s.<sup>84</sup> This project reached its pinnacle in Munich, when the Callcotts attempted to make an entire catalogue of the works in the Pinakothek.<sup>85</sup> Undoubtedly the greatest boon to their investigations regarding the Northern European primitives was, however, their meetings with leading curators, collectors and connoisseurs who evinced a strong interest in art antedating Raphaelesque ‘perfection’.

The first of these meetings took place in Munich at the end of June with the director of the Gemäldegalerie, Georg von Dillis (1759-1841). Maria was dismissive of Dillis’s work as an artist, but strongly praised his connoisseurship, describing him as “a landscape painter of but moderate talent but a very good judge of pictures and well-versed in their individual histories.”<sup>86</sup> Following the Callcotts’ request, Dillis “obligingly looked at some of the old German pictures” with them. Maria did not list what they saw together, but works by Dürer, Cranach, Altdorfer and van Eyck are probable candidates. This was just a visit of a few hours though. Of much greater importance were the Callcotts’ meetings with the Boisserée brothers during their first visit to Munich, whom they found extremely impressive: “We find [Sulpiz

<sup>82</sup>A comment in a letter to John Murray further supports this claim; in relating her surprise regarding the conduct of booksellers on the continent, which differed significantly from that of those in England, Maria mentioned that she had “wanted Mme Schopenhauer’s two little popular vols on early German art.” (NLS, MS. 40186, f. 27). This had to be the 1821 publication by Johanna Henrietta Schopenhauer (mother of the philosopher) entitled *Johann van Eyck und seine Nachfolger*. A later note in Maria’s second journal records that she managed to procure it.

<sup>83</sup>Journal I, ff. 14-16.

<sup>84</sup>RAA/CA 9/1-46.

<sup>85</sup>This catalogue, which comprises a list with brief comments upon the paintings, happily has survived, as it constitutes the final forty-four pages of the Bodleian manuscript previously mentioned (see note 69).

<sup>86</sup>Journal I, f. 31. It is possible that, from Maria’s perspective, this description could be equally applicable to her husband; Brown suggests that letters between Maria and Augustus Kestner, a German diplomat, collector and writer, are evidence that Maria valued her husband’s cerebral skills much more highly than his artistic ones. Brown, 1981, p. 16.



Boisserée] an exceedingly good connoisseur ... he appears perfectly informed on the subject of art, especially as it has been, & is in Germany. He is a sensible, intelligent man & appears to have liberal feelings on all subjects.”<sup>87</sup> The brothers, who were seen then, as now, as the leading figures in the German revival of interest in early art, took on a didactic role, and the Callcotts spent hours discussing the development of Northern European art with them.<sup>88</sup> Maria’s recording of their conversations are particularly valuable for their detailing of the Boisserées’ art historical opinions, but also illustrate her ability to assimilate those opinions with her own viewing experience and form her own views. In conversation Sulpiz had declared that he doubted the authenticity of the “old Hans Holbein” at Schlessheim; although Maria could understand his reservations, her own considered opinion, having seen a work by the same artist in Augsburg, was that:

at the same time it must be owned that much of the design in these works, however caricatured, seems to originate in the same mind - and the figure of Xt. mocked in the small division above the Paul preaching at Augsburg is precisely the same made use of in one of the Schlessheim Gallery. It is possible they may be of an earlier date, or as they are so numerous the work of his pupils painting on his designs.<sup>89</sup>

Extremely fortuitously for the Callcotts, their acquaintance with the Boisserées enabled them to see a substantial portion of their collection of early Northern European art on their second visit to Munich in September 1827. The French suppression of German monasteries and consequent destruction of hundreds of artworks had provided the catalyst for the brothers’ interest in Germany’s artistic heritage, which manifested itself in the systematic collection organised along historical lines they formed after seeing that in the Musée Napoléon in Paris.<sup>90</sup> By 1810 they had set up this collection in Heidelberg along the lines of an academic collection, as an aid to artistic study, and in February 1827 it was purchased in its entirety by King Ludwig I of Bavaria for Munich’s Alte Pinakothek, with the brothers retained as its keepers. Thus the Callcotts saw the Boisserée paintings at Schleissheim with the rest of the King’s private collection. As Maria commented, this favour “occasioned great marvel here - as they say Humbolt has been refused admission even at the Prussian ministers [sic] request and the Queen herself has not yet seen it.”<sup>91</sup> Al-

<sup>87</sup>Journal I, f. 71.

<sup>88</sup>For evaluations of the Boisserées set within the wider context of Germany in the early nineteenth century, see William Vaughan, *German Romantic Painting* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994) and Cordula Grewe, *Painting the Sacred in the Age of Romanticism* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2009).

<sup>89</sup>Journal I, f. 72.

<sup>90</sup>See Gisela Goldberg, ‘History of the Boisserée Collection’, *Apollo*, 116 (1982) pp. 210-262.

<sup>91</sup>Maria Callcott, Journal of a tour by Lady Callcott to Dresden, Munich and Milan, 2: 10 Aug.

though the Boisserées were not infallible in their artistic judgement (despite their decades of serious research on the development of painting in Northern Europe), the fact that their collection comprised over two hundred paintings and was organised, in four groups, by school and era (from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries) meant that this was undoubtedly the most comprehensive survey of early Northern European art the Callcotts could have hoped to have seen during their tour.<sup>92</sup>

The entry in Maria's journal relating to this experience is indicative of both the Callcotts' responsiveness to the Northern European primitives and their willingness to form their own opinions regarding the aesthetic merits of the works they saw. This also illustrates their comparative lack of conditioning regarding the relative qualities of the various artists, in contrast to their much more developed ideas about early Italian art. Most significant are Maria's comments on the superiorities of earlier works to those of the German and Flemish primitives who were known and esteemed, by some, in England at the time: "we were taken into the room where William of Cologne and his school were placed - there is great feeling for beauty and more breadth in the painting particularly the heads than in the upper German school."<sup>93</sup> This visual familiarity with thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Northern European works led the Callcotts to make a particularly radical judgement: "We feel that deservedly high as Albrecht Dürer's name is in some respects yet that as a painter he was far below most of those of the low German school".<sup>94</sup> This overturning of an established maxim - the superiority of Dürer amongst Northern European Renaissance painters - in the canon of contemporary taste illustrates, more than perhaps any other statement of the German journals, the Callcotts' independence of mind and progressiveness in their willingness to contemplate seriously pre-sixteenth-century art.

The format of the Italian leg of the Callcotts' tour followed much the same pattern as that in Germany in terms of their experience of early art. Venice was their first major stop, and the names of Titian, Tintoretto and Veronese, the great

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- 24 Sept. 1827, f. 56. Bodleian MSS. d. Eng. 2276.

<sup>92</sup>The second group of the collection was entitled "Jan van Eyck and his school, from its beginnings until the end of the fifteenth century", and many of the paintings were wrongly attributed to van Eyck, including Rogier van der Weyden's *Adoration of the Magi* triptych and the *Seven Joys of the Virgin* by Hans Memling.

<sup>93</sup>Journal II, f. 71. William, or Wilhelm, of Cologne (probably Wilhelm von Herle) is documented as having been active in the city between 1358 and 1378. He was described by the chronicler of Limbourg in 1380 as 'the best painter in the German lands' who was particularly celebrated for depicting the human figure 'as if it were alive'. However, whether or not he can be connected to any surviving work is a contested issue, and thus any work the Callcotts saw attributed to him was most likely by a pupil or member of his school. 'Upper' and 'lower' were English terms with a geographical meaning

<sup>94</sup>*Ibid.*, f. 76.

triumvirate of Venetian painting, naturally dominate the journals of both Maria and Augustus during the three weeks they spent in the city. They did also make two separate trips to Torcello especially to visit the “ancient Cathedral & the church of Sta Fosca [which were] extremely interesting”.<sup>95</sup> They then proceeded to Padua where the Arena Chapel was undoubtedly the great draw. The Callcotts also sought out and copied frescoes by Giotto in Padua’s Town Hall and by Giusto de Menabuoi in the Baptistry and paid a great deal of attention to Mantegna’s frescoes in the Eremitani. However, Florence was arguably the city which best rewarded their endeavours, although it perhaps shared the crown with Rome where they saw what Maria described as the ‘complete’ series of the revival of painting, from “the altarpieces of the Byzantines, the first efforts of the Italians ... up to Giotto” in the Vatican.<sup>96</sup> The riches contained in the medieval Florentine churches - panels and fresco cycles they believed to be by Giotto, Orcagna, Ghirlandaio and Lorenzo Monaco, for example - were also looked at, discussed and sometimes copied and later returned to, and long visits were made to the collections of the Uffizi and Accademia. Fra Angelico emerged as a particularly favoured artist, and his visual language essentially defines what it was that the Callcotts admired in early Italian painting - gracefulness and expression combined with clarity, in the sense of a clear and unencumbered communication of the story.

The Callcotts also returned to Florence for a second visit, where they bought multiple prints and paintings, including a ‘head of Botticelli’. This time, however, they spent time exploring Tuscany, admiring - amongst other things - the allegorical frescoes by Ambrogio Lorenzetti in the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena and visiting Lucca, where they saw and recorded the Aspertini frescoes in a chapel in S. Frediano. In Pisa they met Carlo Lasinio, conservator of the Campo Santo and author of the 1812 illustrated publication *Pittore e fresco del Campo Santo di Pisa*. Lasinio took over the role fulfilled by the Boisserées in Munich and spent around two days almost exclusively with the couple, taking them to the Campo Santo and the city’s drawing school before discussing, over dinner and breakfast, art-historical problems such as fresco restoration, misattributions and distinguishing the hands of lesser-known members of the Giottesque school. The Callcotts, although placing themselves in the roles of students throughout the tour, demonstrated in their assessment of Lasinio’s prints after the Campo Santo frescoes that they were not too much in awe of their teachers to evaluate their work critically. On their last afternoon they spent “4

<sup>95</sup>Maria Callcott, Journal of a tour by Lady Callcott to Dresden, Munich and Milan, 3: 25 Sept. -10 Nov. 1827, ff. 28v and 29v respectively, Bodleian MSS. d. Eng. 2277. The apse of Torcello cathedral contains a large Byzantine mosaic of the *Last Judgement*

<sup>96</sup>Maria Callcott, Journal of a tour by Lady Callcott to Dresden, Munich and Milan, 5., f. 18r, Bodleian MSS. Eng. d. 2278.

hours comparing [Lasinio's prints] with the originals - in general they are faithful as to composition now and then failing in other things as in the Hagar to whom the angel appears, her head in Benozzo is more thrown back - her whole appearance more fervid. The general effect is neglected, there is too much strong shadow in the prints, the draperies are too much cut up and there is a want of breadth. They are liney and harsh."<sup>97</sup>

What undoubtedly further expedited the Callcotts' appreciation of the early art they saw first-hand during their tour were their numerous encounters with contemporary artists who were collectively termed 'Nazarenes' in both Germany and Italy. Again, it was the couple's declared intention from the beginning to expose themselves to as much modern art as possible: "In coming to Germany, one great object of curiosity with us was the state of modern art in painting: & Bonn is the first place where we have been able to gratify that curiosity ourselves with a sight of any modern works."<sup>98</sup> In Bonn they saw the monumental fresco depicting *Theology* executed by Jacon Götzenberger, who was then at work on three companions to it. The Callcotts were impressed with Götzenberger both as a person and an artist, deciding that the "chief excellence of the [Theology fresco] consists in its General design."<sup>99</sup> Their major criticism resided with the negative pictorial effects caused by the "desire to display character". Their first critical approbation of modern German painting reveals the deep-seated concerns the Callcotts shared about modern art patronage:

It is no small praise that these painters should have chosen such a road, & if they have not gone as far as we could wish, they have yet outstuffed gone fathar[sic] beyond than we had a right to expect considering the degree of encouragement held out to art of this kind. Götzenberger told us it was impossible to live by his gains as a fresco painter."<sup>100</sup>

As the above example demonstrates, the Callcotts were not afraid to engage critically with the efforts of the revivalist painters and, as they subverted the established canon of taste for Dürer above that for earlier art, they similarly formed their own opinions concerning the merits of the different Nazarene painters. The drawing of Peter Cornelius, for example, who enjoyed almost consistent royal patronage and

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<sup>97</sup>*Ibid.*, f. 45v. This judgement was still held by Maria ten years later, when she added to her abridged personal translation of Seroux d'Agincourt's *Histoire...* a lengthy section entitled "Subjects of the plates representing the pictures of the Campo Santo of Pisa published by Lasinio compared with the originals in 1827 and found unexpectedly correct as to subject & present state of pictures but meagre in spirit & deficient in feeling. MC 1837." RAA/CA/C12.

<sup>98</sup>MS. Eng. d. 2280, f. 14r.

<sup>99</sup>Journal I., f. 8r.

<sup>100</sup>*Ibid.*, f. 8v.

was ennobled in recognition of his achievements, was considered to be weak and - although they developed more of an understanding of Cornelius's method, in which it was the invention, and not the execution, that was prized - the mentions of his work are general fairly equivocal. By contrast, Callcott in particular highly esteemed the work of Overbeck, which they first encountered in Dresden. In reference to the cartoons for the frescoes decorating the Villa Massimo in Rome, Maria reported that "A. is very much struck with Overbeck's cartoon ... [of] the story of Sofronio [and Olino] ... some of the heads A says as fine as anything can be".<sup>101</sup> This opinion was only consolidated on seeing drawings at the same artist's studio in Rome a number of months later. This trip was made in the company of Charles Eastlake, who was still residing in Rome during the winter of 1827/28. Given the scope of the Callcotts' experiences over the preceding six months and their new familiarity with both 'ancient' and 'modern' primitives, one imagines the three companions engaging in endless discussions concerning the present and potential relationship between modern art of all schools and the beginnings of the revival of interest in early Italian and Northern European art. Meeting up with Eastlake would also have allowed Callcott to engage in detailed technical discussions; as Brown and Lloyd pointed out, the "keen interest in techniques" displayed by the Callcotts throughout the tour in all the art they looked at probably ultimately derived from the painter and was "related to his own work and training."<sup>102</sup>

A fitting conclusion to this brief discussion of the honeymoon and the Callcotts' strong interest in both 'ancient' and 'modern' primitives reverts again to Brown and Lloyd. Their contention that the Callcotts' aesthetic judgements and ideas are still relevant for the historiography of early art today was based on the notion that their "predilection for primitive painting [was] so closely allied to the revival of interest in that period of art generally."<sup>103</sup> As will be demonstrated in the following section, certain artworks that had been produced in the early nineteenth century provided the framework within which the Callcotts intended their publication concerning Giotto's Arena Chapel frescoes to be understood. This is compounded by the fact that the words used by Maria to describe her understanding of the motivations of the primitive artists are almost an exact recapitulation of a thought that first occurred to her when seeing Götzenberger's modern frescoes in Bonn: "The feelings are assisted at first in favour of the work by an appeal to our best appreciations, even in the colour we are reminded of those works which belong to the age when painting had for its object to tell the story and convey the

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<sup>101</sup>Journal II, f. 5r

<sup>102</sup>Brown and Lloyd, 1981, p. 13.

<sup>103</sup>*Ibid.*

sentiment required, rather than to display the minor excellencies of the art.”<sup>104</sup>

*Description of the chapel of the Annunziata dell’ Arena;  
or, Giotto’s chapel, in Padua.*

Two surviving letters written by Maria Callcott regarding the publication of the above volume, her second known work of art-historical scholarship, serve to render even more opaque the circumstances surrounding its genesis. The first letter is bound up in the British Library copy of the volume, which was presented by the author to the Rt. Hon. Thomas Grenville:<sup>105</sup>

Invalids have sometimes strange fancies. This winter one of mine was to print a description of Giotto’s chapel in Padua which is now in a state of decay & may soon perish. I am not aware that any other person has thought of preserving any memorial of this precious work. The wood cuts are drawn on the blocks by Mr Callcott; the cuts executed by Thomson & the poor lithograph my very last attempt at holding a pencil.<sup>106</sup> Will you do me the favour to accept the copy of the “Description” as a mark of my gratitude for your kindness ever since I have had the pleasure of knowing you. If I live I hope to put in order (even though I should never print) what I have collected concerning Art in England.<sup>107</sup>

Maria’s use of language in this letter raises two questions. Given the lapse of time between the Callcotts visiting the chapel in 1827 and her decision to write the *Description* in the winter of 1834/5, one can assume that the Callcotts were kept occupied by other work in the interim, which rather negates Maria’s self-professed concern with preserving a visual record of the chapel’s decoration (reiterated again in the volume’s preface). Also, the phrase ‘strange fancy’ is most likely to be a disingenuous conceit, designed to explain (or perhaps, in fact, forestall questions about?) her motivation for undertaking work such as this purely for her own amusement. However, that phrase is imbued with a rather more sinister undertone when one reads the above letter in conjunction with another, written only two weeks later, to John Murray:

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<sup>104</sup>Journal I., f. 8v.

<sup>105</sup>The book is bound with Grenville’s crest. Grenville was a politician and bibliophile who left more than 20,000 volumes to the British Library after his death.

<sup>106</sup>This lithograph referenced by Maria, a picturesque exterior view of the chapel, is not present in the copy now at Norwich Record Office, given by Maria to her old music master William Crotch (NRO MC 595/1, 780 x 7).

<sup>107</sup>Kensington Gravel Pits, February 5th 1835.

About ten days ago we sent you a copy for yourself & another for your son, of a description of Giotto's chapel at Padua. It is printed strictly for private circulation, & being anxious that no copy sh.d fall into wrong hands I should be glad to know whether you received the copies intended for you.<sup>108</sup>

The private printing of specialist material, to be disseminated amongst select groups of like-minded connoisseurs, was by no means uncommon in the mid nineteenth century, following the model of Horace Walpole's Strawberry Hill Press (1757-1789). Perhaps Maria was concerned that the subject matter of the volume could be considered inflammatory or contentious? The passing of the Catholic Relief Act in 1829, coupled with the rise of the Oxford Movement, had done nothing to allay the suspicions of a deeply conservative public whose overriding concern was the resurgence of 'popery', and a description of a late medieval fresco cycle in which emphasis on the life of the Virgin was strong could have been misinterpreted. Ruskin, almost twenty years later, expressed his own concerns about the potential for being accused of mariolatry in attaching his name to the Arundel Society's publication of engravings of the frescoes. The secrecy surrounding the publication of the *Description*, then, may well have been a conscious attempt to avoid angering, upsetting or necessarily distancing certain of Callcott's wealthy patrons. Fascinatingly, the Giotto volume was then published for public consumption the year after Augustus Wall Callcott's death (three years following that of Maria) by Charles Dolman, a Roman Catholic publisher.<sup>109</sup> The potentially various motivations that could be attributed to the Callcotts regarding their writing and publication of the *Description* will be discussed again in the section concerning the reception and influence of the volume. Suffice to say, however, that the frustratingly scant details concerning the prosaic elements of the *Description*'s publication are matched, rather surprisingly, by the brevity of the surviving notes recorded separately by Maria and her husband, to which this chapter will now turn.

In the preface to the *Description*, and indeed echoed in a review in the *Athenaeum* of the 1845 edition, both Maria as author and Augustus as illustra-

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<sup>108</sup>Dated 17th February 1835.

<sup>109</sup>This author has been able to trace only two of these editions, which are in the collections of the Boston Athenaeum and Chicago's Newberry Library. This compares to almost thirty known copies of the 1835 edition. Furthermore, the advertisements for the publication of the Dolman edition all state that the work was "printed privately for the author in 1839". A document now in the archive of the National Art Library could be interpreted as evidence that it was John Callcott Horsely who authorised the 1845 publication; entitled "Extract from the Instructions left by Augustus Callcott", one paragraph reads as follows: "I likewise wish to be given to [John Horsely] together with Lady Callcott's M.S.S. on Art & her journal of our Tour to Germany & Italy in 1827 my books of notes on the various pictures that came under my inspection on that occasion. Trusting that he will preserve them in a way respectful to both our memories." National Art Library, MSL/1973/4012/54.

tor stated that their respective contributions to the volume were based on notes and sketches made “on the spot” in November 1827.<sup>110</sup> According to the third of Maria’s honeymoon journals, the Callcotts made three separate trips to the Arena Chapel during their stay in Padua, on the fifth, sixth and seventh of November.<sup>111</sup> Although their second and third visits also lasted for a number of hours, Maria gave no details of their activities. Thus her surviving notes derive solely from her first visit to the chapel, and consist of only one and a half folios. Those of her husband are even more sparse, especially considering that the whereabouts of the sketches he must have made on the spot is currently unknown. There is only a double-page spread in his notebook (Fig. 84) relating to the chapel; on the left-hand side is a sketch of a bearded male on his knees, praying, and on the facing page notes headed ‘Annunciata subjects’ (Fig. 103).<sup>112</sup> However, in a letter to her long-time friend the antiquary Dawson Turner, Maria intimated that, had not constraints of time and ill-health prevented it, the Giotto volume would have been longer and more detailed, as “we have material”.<sup>113</sup> In the absence of these fuller notes, an evaluation of the aims and achievements of the volume can rest only on the contents of the volume itself and the sparse jottings in the Callcotts’ respective honeymoon journals.

The title-page of the *Description* gives the name of the author as Mrs. Callcott. On the facing page (of most copies) is a strongly romanticised lithograph giving an exterior view of the chapel (Fig. 86) which was based on a sketch by Peter Powell, an unintentional but nonetheless welcome travelling companion for some of the Italian portion of their tour.<sup>114</sup> The work itself comprises twenty pages, prefaced with an ‘Advertisement’ written by Maria. This brief statement sets out her reason for printing the volume - which was her belief that “this interesting relic” was “likely to perish in the next few years” - before clarifying its nature as a description, rather than an analysis, of the fresco cycle: “It will be seen that no criticism has been

<sup>110</sup> *The Athenaeum*, August 2nd 1845, p. 770. This review, along with another in the *Literary Gazette* (1845), pp. 863-864, will be discussed in greater depth subsequently. “On the spot” is a phrase that was used extensively in relation to travel/imperial imagery in the eighteenth and nineteenth century.

<sup>111</sup> Journal III, ff. 30v-31r.

<sup>112</sup> CI/AWC/1/10 f. 24v.

<sup>113</sup> Letter from Maria Callcott to Dawson Turner, Trinity College, Cambridge, Dawson Turner Letters, f. 147.

<sup>114</sup> Powell’s somewhat breathless description of the chapel, in a letter from Padua to Charles Robert Leslie, offers some context for his envisaging of the monument: “I have been delighted beyond measure with some of the fresco paintings of the very early masters. There is a beautiful chapel in this city, entirely painted by the most celebrated of those great men, namely Giotto, the contemplation of which has made an entire revolution in my ideas respecting what is termed High Art ... My dear fellow, you ought to visit Italy, if only to see this chapel, for I know no-one with whose feelings and taste it would be so congenial, unless it were Stothard.” Leslie, 1860, pp. 186-187.



attempted, beyond what a just description necessarily brought along with it.”<sup>115</sup> Furthermore, as previously alluded to, Maria reinforced the scholarly validity of the work by emphasising that it was based on first-hand examination.<sup>116</sup> To Maria’s Advertisement is added a Postscript written by Callcott. This addresses only the issue of the ‘truthfulness’ of his illustrations, and will thus be analysed in the context of a discussion of the illustrations themselves. It is necessary to point out at this juncture that, although this page appears to indicate a very clear division of labour for the volume (i.e. the text being the responsibility of Maria, and the illustrations of Callcott) and reinforces the designation of the title of author to Maria, that the pronoun ‘we’ is in evidence throughout the rest of the text reflects the fact that the work was a product of the shared connoisseurship developed by the Callcotts during their honeymoon and refined thereafter. Thus the *Description*, in the context of this study, can only be evaluated as a co-production, and no part - whether that be illustration or segment of text - divorced from one or other of the Callcotts.<sup>117</sup>

To return to the contents of the *Description*; following the Advertisement, the volume begins with a numbered plan of the interior of the chapel, designed to correspond with the chronologically-numbered descriptions of the frescoes that comprise the main body of the text (Figs. 87 and 88). It is interesting that there are two figures included in the far left-hand distance of this interior view. Though difficult to see, one figure appears to be male and the other female, suggesting that this could be a representation of the Callcotts in the act of examining the chapel and thus a strategic visual reinforcement of the authority of their text.<sup>118</sup> The first two pages of the *Description* are then given to an introduction to the fresco cycle, which begins with a brief résumé of the history of the chapel and its current state. Possibly the most distinguishing feature of the Callcotts’ respective honeymoon journals is the

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<sup>115</sup>Callcott, 1835, p. i.

<sup>116</sup>In this the Callcotts were applying the same rigorous conditions to the practice of art history as their more famous contemporaries; Waagen, Rumohr, Passavant and Kugler, for example, largely refused to analyse works they did not see first-hand.

<sup>117</sup>This understanding of the *Description* as an entirely joint endeavour is reinforced by documentary evidence concerning another art-historical text, again attributed solely to Maria - the *Essays Towards a History of Painting*, published in 1836. In a letter addressed to the artist Richard Evans, who had written querying an aesthetic judgement made in the above-mentioned publication, Callcott responded that “I ventured to criticise [the artwork(s)] as such and to make the obvious remarks which Lady Callcott has adapted in her Essay”, demonstrating that he was closely involved with more than just the illustrative side of their published art criticism. Bodleian MS. Eng. e. 2430.

<sup>118</sup>The Callcotts’ interior view of the chapel thus differs from that later published by the Arundel Society, as a chromolithograph, after a drawing by Mrs. Higford-Burr (Fig. 89) which depicts two figures identified as Dante and Giotto. As Matthew Plampin argues, the inclusion of this chromolithograph in the Arundel Society project undermined the art-historical scholarship which John Ruskin, who was heavily involved in the project, tried to bring to bear on the figure of Giotto. Matthew Plampin, “A Stern and Just Respect for Truth: John Ruskin, Giotto and the Arundel Society”, *Visual Culture in Britain*, 6 (2005), pp. 59-78.

absence of source-criticism, and this is carried over into the *Description*.<sup>119</sup> Thus factual information dispensed is given no reference (not that this is particularly unusual for literature of the period), and one can only assume that the Callcotts' knowledge of the saving of the chapel from destruction by Napoleon himself came from the fathers of the Eremitani who, by the time of the Callcotts' visit, had jurisdiction over the chapel.<sup>120</sup> The remainder of Maria's introduction describes Giotto's decorative scheme in its entirety, and then offers the following assessment of the condition of the work: "The greater number of the pictures are completely preserved, as far as the design goes; none are obliterated, excepting something which once apparently filled up the east end over the entrance to the choir. A very few have suffered from mildew, but in many of them the colours of the drapery have changed, or chipped."<sup>121</sup>

Undoubtedly the most interesting portion of the introduction is the penultimate paragraph for the insight it gives the reader into the Callcotts' connoisseurship:

This chapel itself is a monument of the spirit of the early artists; they employed all their power to tell their story purely and intelligibly; they considered it as a work of piety, to set before the beholders the true history of that Gospel, which was to save them, and of those Saints who were to act as mediators between them and their Redeemer: and so little was the idea of personal display and distinction in the mere practical part of the art thought of, that we find pupils, rivals, and their descendants, all adopting, as if by common consent, such compositions as the Public of the time (which had no books, but pictures, wherein to learn these things) seemed to agree told the story best. In addition to this excellence of telling the story truly, the pictures in this chapel are eminent for a very peculiar expression and grace; qualities which Flaxman had long ago perceived and acknowledged in the works of Giotto and his school in Italy, and to which his own designs, and those of Stothard, who, without

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<sup>119</sup>Indeed the framework of the Callcotts' analysis of art during their honeymoon seems to have been almost exclusively formal, with only a couple of instances where they consulted archival documentation.

<sup>120</sup>"... a French officer, who was superintending the demolition of the convent, saw and recognised the decorations of the chapel as the work of Giotto; he immediately went to General Buonaparte [sic], reported his discovery, and received orders to preserve the chapel. The General did more; for he instituted a mass in perpetuity, to be sung every morning at seven o'clock, which renders it imperative on the religious societies in the region to keep it in constant repair." Callcott, 1835, p. 1.

<sup>121</sup>The condition of the frescoes as recorded here seems less severe than Maria's fears about the loss of the chapel and its contents in her introduction would suggest. Rumohr, visiting Italy only a couple of years before, had concluded that the frescoes were in too bad a condition and, additionally, too over-painted to allow for an accurate assessment: "In their present state they give no basis for judging their merits or demerits." Carl F. von Rumohr, *Italienische Forschungen*, ed. by Julius Schlosser, (Frankfurt: Frankfurter verlags-anstalt, 1920) p. 270.

a knowledge of the older masters, intuitively drew the same qualities from Nature, their common source, having accustomed the intelligent among ourselves.<sup>122</sup>

The criteria by which the Callcotts judged the achievements of early Italian artists - an ability to tell a story 'truly', through direct recourse to nature - is undeniably strongly proto-Ruskinian.<sup>123</sup> Furthermore, the referencing of the nascent English appreciation of the primitives implies that the *Description* was intended to be seen as propagating that mode of understanding; perhaps, also, the naming of Flaxman and Stothard was aimed at creating a familiar aesthetic reference for the reader when viewing Callcott's illustrations to the work, an idea which will be explored further as this chapter progresses.

The Introduction is completed with a reiteration of Maria's decision not to analyse the works:

"it is not my intention, even if it were in my power, to enter any discussion on the merits or the defects of the early Italian painters: my object being simply to name the Pictures and quote the texts, from both the True and Apocryphal Gospels which have furnished the subjects."<sup>124</sup>

This, of course, did not turn out to be the case, and the descriptive paragraphs following her naming of the pictures and quoting of the texts expand in size as the volume progresses. These sections will not be analysed thoroughly but rather only when they correspond or relate in some way to Augustus Wall Callcott's illustrations. The scope of Maria's opinions were wide, however, ranging from aesthetic criticism and the physical condition of individual frescoes to social commentary and references to contemporary Italian architecture; the inclusion of these last two, in particular, means that her commentary on the chapel decoration could be seen to function as a microcosm of her typical literary interests.<sup>125</sup>

Excluding the plan of the chapel, there are ten illustrations to Maria's description of the Arena Chapel frescoes, which become more reductive as the volume

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<sup>122</sup>Callcott, 1835, p. 2.

<sup>123</sup>These comments can also be understood as a recapitulation, of sorts, of the long-standing eighteenth-century artistic debate regarding truth versus nature, or the general versus the particular.

<sup>124</sup>*Ibid.* The first part of this sentence, although perhaps true at the time of writing, is negated by a manuscript in the Royal Academy archive entitled *Characters of early Italian painters* (RAA/CA/11). This appears to be perhaps a first draft of a work intended for publication, and includes biographical sketches of a number of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century artists.

<sup>125</sup>In her commentary on the fresco depicting the Birth of the Virgin, for example, Maria passed judgement on the tradition of swaddling: "The washing the babe occupies the foreground, one of the attendants is being employed in preparing the swathing bands that still continue to deform the children of Italy." *Ibid.*, p. 4.

progresses. Before tackling the veracity of Callcott's copies, the somewhat surprising choice of subject matter requires discussion, and a list of Callcott's illustrations is necessary. Firstly, the subjects represented do not entirely correspond with the page of notes made by Callcott in 1827, entitled 'Annunciata Subjects', which identifies particular frescoes and details for praise.<sup>126</sup> There is no visual representation in the *Description* of, for example, the betrayal scene, nor the subsequent ones of the mocking of Christ and the Crucifixion, in which Callcott (in his brief notes) highlighted the group of soldiers dividing Christ's garments. There is also no illustration of the salutation, which Callcott described in his notes as being "as [...] dignified & sweet as possible", or the nativity scene, where he picked out the "good shepherd"[sic] as having "great dignity".<sup>127</sup> Considering that the nineteenth-century characterisation of Giotto was built around his achievements in rendering emotional states (Maria wrote of a Giotto who "rather delights in subjects of devotion and deep, quiet feeling"), the omission of illustrations after the two scenes widely considered to epitomise Giotto's unprecedented understanding of the human condition - the Virgin and Child in the Nativity scene, and the moment in that of the Betrayal immediately prior to Judas identifying Jesus with a kiss - is particularly incongruous.<sup>128</sup> But if the Callcotts missed Giotto the naturalist, the keen observer of human interaction, who was the Giotto they sought to portray?

The subjects of the ten woodcuts that do illustrate the work are, in order, two details from the *Last Judgement* (Figs. 90 and 91), which decorate the title page and headpiece of the *Description*, respectively; *The Meeting of Joachim and Anna at the Golden Gate* (Fig. 92); a detail from *The Marriage of the Virgin* (Fig. 93); the procession from the fresco Maria called 'Mary goes home to Joseph's House' (Fig. 94); the figure of Christ in the *Raising of Lazarus* (Fig. 95); that of St. John in the *Lamentation* (Fig. 96); Mary Magdalene from the *Resurrection* (Fig. 97); the Virgin in the *Ascension* (Fig. 98) and finally the figure of Hope from the series of Seven Virtues and Seven Vices (Fig. 99). Clues as to the rationale behind the subjects chosen for illustration obviously lie within the accompanying text, and that relating to the *Last Judgement* fresco entirely covering the west wall of the chapel is particularly revealing. That the *Description* was privately printed, and presumably funded by the Callcotts themselves, means that its presentation must have necessarily been circumscribed by financial concerns. No doubt this was a major factor in the utilisation of the relatively cheap medium of wood-engraving (rather

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<sup>126</sup>*Ibid.*, note 102.

<sup>127</sup>*Ibid.*, note 102.

<sup>128</sup>Callcott, 1835, p. 7. Ruskin was later to write that Giotto "defines, explains, and exalts every sweet incident of human nature." John Ruskin, *The Works of John Ruskin*, ed. Edward Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, vol. 23 (London and New York: Longmans, 1909) p. 333.

than aquatint, for example) for the illustrations, though the Callcotts may also have been attempting to evoke the stylistic qualities of Trecento art through their choice of reproductive media, as John Ruskin insisted upon in relation to the Arundel Society's illustrations of the Arena Chapel frescoes twenty years later.<sup>129</sup> The remit that the Callcotts imposed upon themselves evidently precluded offering full-scale illustrations of the entire decorative cycle, but it again seems anomalous that more of the *Last Judgement* (if not the fresco in its entirety) was not illustrated for the reader, given both its status as an important precursor to Michelangelo's masterpiece and, as Maria related, the consistently rehashed anecdote in which it was cast as the conduit between Dante and Giotto: "the hell, which the guides are fond of telling you was suggested by Dante, when he visited Giotto, whilst at work at this chapel".<sup>130</sup>

The fresco was a puzzle for the Callcotts, however:

This great composition contains some of the very best, as well as the worst, portion of Giotto's work in this chapel. The expression of the Saviour, inviting the good with his right hand, is grand and solemn; so are the figures of the twelve judges; and there is the greatest reverence and beauty in the groups of the blessed, and the angels. But the hell ... presents nothing but mean and grotesque images, which we regret that time has not entirely obliterated.<sup>131</sup>

The strong language used by Maria in the last portion of this sentence is thus reflected visually by the complete lack of illustration of the hell portion of the *Last Judgement*, and the Callcotts were presumably so convinced of their opinion that they felt no need to provide any kind of visual evidence by which the reader could formulate their own judgement. There may be yet a further layer to this particular issue, however. The aforementioned two illustrations of details from the fresco that are included in the volume are divorced from the context of their textual description - the only incidence of this in the entire publication. In the case of the copy of the figural group representing the presentation of a model of the chapel by its patron Enrico Scrovegni to the Virgin, which appears on the title page (Fig. 90), this does not seem discordant. That the illustration of the detail entitled 'The Elect led to Heaven by the Angels' does not accompany the text which praises it is more peculiar though. However, the Callcotts' scorn for the hell section of the fresco is borne out

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<sup>129</sup>The Callcotts were at the forefront of the use of woodcuts for illustrative purposes, which only in the 1830s became the "dominant reproductive process used by publishers". Leo John De Freitas, 'Wood-engraving', *Grove Art Online*, Oxford Art Online. Oxford University Press, accessed September 25, 2011, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T092201>.

<sup>130</sup>Callcott, 1835, p. 13.

<sup>131</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

by modern scholarship, which generally concedes that the crudeness of the figures suggests that Giotto was not involved in either their design or execution; perhaps placing the Elect illustration elsewhere was a subliminal response to concerns over the authorship of parts of the *Last Judgement*.<sup>132</sup>

The first illustration accompanying a textual description is that of the seminal moment from the Life of Joachim and Anna, as told in Jacopo da Voragine's *Golden Legend* - the meeting of Joachim and Anna at the Golden Gate. The differences between this illustration (Fig. 100) and its source (Fig. 101) are acute, and terming it an 'interpretation' rather than a straightforward copy would be much more accurate. As a copyist, Callcott did not faithfully translate Trecento stylistic qualities in the illustrations and, in this one in particular, the feeling created by the physiognomies of the characters, hairstyles (particularly that of Anna) and, to a lesser extent, costumes, is much more early Victorian than Giottesque.<sup>133</sup> The hair of Callcott's female figures, for example, is dressed in what might be termed a rustic, simpler, adaptation of the type of braided hairstyle fashionable in the 1830s and worn by the young Queen Victoria, with braids looping over the ears and tied into low buns, as opposed to the more rigorously realised braided hairstyles in the Giotto fresco; so too do Callcott's female figures have a sweetness in their facial features and expressions that is absent from the fourteenth-century frescoes.

Callcott admitted to the disparity between his copies and the originals in his addendum to Maria's Advertisement, which demands quoting in its entirety:

The wood engravings accompanying this description are to be looked upon as recollections rather than as fac-similies of the designs they are taken from. The circumstances under which I sketched and obtained the memoranda from which the present drawings for the engraver were made, will not allow of my doing more than I have done. The rigid Critics in Art will, no doubt, object to such renderings, from the absence of those peculiarities and even defects belonging to the age in which the works were executed; but the features which mark an artist's strength and originality, and which constitute the beauty of his work, are essentially distinct from those which arise out of the accidents of the time in which he lived.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>132</sup>For example, Pietro Toesca, *Il Trecento* (Torino: Unione tipografico-editrice torinese, 1951) and Roberto Salvini, *Giotto, la chapelle des Scrovegni* (Florence: Arnaud, 1953).

<sup>133</sup>In Callcott's defence, however, he did not fall into the trap of literally 'updating' his copy to the early nineteenth century through utilising devices such as contemporary fashion.

<sup>134</sup>Callcott, 1835, p. i. Callcott's language makes for a fascinating comparison between his approach and that of Thomas Patch, who did strive to create facsimiles.

David Brown suggested that Callcott's preface makes clear that he was predominantly concerned with the spiritual quality of the Arena Chapel decoration, rather than with its pictorial expression.<sup>135</sup> The main frame of reference seems to be artistic, though, and Callcott's justification for his intentional stylistic amelioration of Giotto's frescoes is rooted in the Vasarian conception of the infantile state - lacking a knowledge of perspective and anatomy - of the first era of Italian Renaissance painting, that period in which Giotto "accident[ally]" lived.

As will be demonstrated, Callcott's illustrations were essentially outline drawings (with no shading and thus no evocation of colour and/or texture) and thus recognisably recognisably in the 'primitive drawing tradition' pioneered by John Flaxman and William Blake. Deanna Petherbridge locates the innovatory nature of Flaxman's approach to drawing in his focus on outline and his eschewing of background and ornamental detail, very distant from the much looser technique and bolder style of his contemporaries (Fig. 102).<sup>136</sup> Callcott's illustrations also parallel those of Flaxman in this respect, as they focus solely on figures rather than recreating or copying Giotto's whole image.<sup>137</sup> The framework of the critical reception of Flaxman's illustrations of Dante and Homer shifted in the early decades of the nineteenth century; whereas George Romney wrote in 1793 that the Homer engravings were "in the style of antient[sic] art ... They look as if they had been made in the age, when Homer wrote", Thomas Uwins in the 1820s spoke of Flaxman having studied and received his inspiration from the school of Giotto and Cimabue.<sup>138</sup> The inference, then, as the Callcotts also noted, was that Flaxman recognised and appreciated an intrinsic beauty in early Italian art, in spite of its various technical failings, and was able to assimilate this into his own productions, but which

<sup>135</sup>Brown, 1979, p. 166.

<sup>136</sup>Petherbridge quotes the following statement from one of Flaxman's R.A. lectures: "articles of furniture or background ... as they are utterly separated from the pathos of sublime composition, can scarcely deserve any share of [the artist's] attention." Deanna Petherbridge, 'Constructing the Language of Line', in Bindman, ed., 2003, pp. 7-13.

<sup>137</sup>One potential interpretation of Callcott's words could be that the "features" which "mark[ed] an artist's strength" were, for him, intimately related to their portrayal of figures, though this might have been somewhat of a peculiar belief for him to hold considering that his primary artistic output was landscape paintings.

<sup>138</sup>Romney's comment is quoted in David Irwin, *English Neo-Classical Art: Studies in Inspiration and Taste* (London: Faber, 1966) p. 86. Uwins was an ardent admirer of Flaxman, to the extent that he credited him with directing the taste of the Germans towards the early Italians: "It was in this school [that of Giotto and Cimabue], even more than the antique, that Flaxman studied, and it is following soundings left by Flaxman that the Germans are now making such discoveries and such progress as will lead to the regeneration of taste throughout Europe. You do not know, however, how to honour Flaxman in the country of his birth. England should set up a monument to his memory in every important town from north to south; children should be taught to lisp his name, and a relish of his works should be infused into the instructions of the nursery. Lawrence will be recollected long after his death; Wilkie may wear out some ages, but Flaxman will live for ever." Letter from Uwins to Raimbach, Naples, 9 Jan 1827, quoted in *A Memoir of Thomas Uwins, by Mrs Uwins*, vol. II (London, 1858) p. 331.

then in turn were necessarily more advanced than the paintings and drawings of the primitives due to his superior skill. The constant name-checking of Flaxman in early-nineteenth-century discussions of the Italian primitives demonstrates that Flaxman's austere, simplified aesthetic - perceived to be analogous to early art in its desire to communicate the story, or an emotion, clearly, rather than being solely concerned with "display[ing] the minor excellencies of the art" - helped to make such art more palatable for a wider audience.<sup>139</sup>

To return again to Callcott's preface, his phrase "the circumstances under which I sketched" is tantalising. It is explicit from Maria's journal, corroborated by their companion Powell's account, that the group were at the chapel for a number of hours on three separate occasions. As, judging by the multitude of extant sketches from the honeymoon, Callcott seems to have been a rapid draughtsman (albeit one with a strong attention to detail, as can be seen in the shading in the face and drapery of the kneeling man in his Venetian notebook (Fig. 103), one surmises that he had time enough to accurately capture the fresco compositions.<sup>140</sup> Perhaps Callcott was referring to the practicalities of the visit - sketching in the poor light of autumnal November days may have been difficult, as would simply being able to see the details of the top two tiers of frescoes, which may account for a number of the inaccuracies. The chief problem with his copy of the *Meeting at the Golden Gate* fresco, however, is the misrepresentation of the contact between Joachim and Anna. In changing Giotto's kiss between husband and wife to a mere embrace, Callcott missed a fundamental moment of Giotto's narrative. The kiss given by Anna to Joachim prefigures that given by Judas to Jesus at the moment of the betrayal which, of course, is not actually depicted by Giotto, meaning that the realisation of the kiss in the Joachim and Anna fresco provides a strong visual counterpoint to the later image.

The next two illustrations by Callcott correspond with the brief notes he made about the chapel subjects in his notebook. His comment about the Salutation, which he did not illustrate, being "as dignified & sweet as possible" was also applied to the "marriage of Virgin & the processors in the next adjoining pictures"[sic].<sup>141</sup> In Callcott's version of the first of these subjects, there is no major subversion of a pictorial motif such as that described in the preceding paragraph. The physiognomies of the three figures Callcott selected to represent - Mary, Joseph

<sup>139</sup>Maria's words when discussing the fresco *Theology* by Jacob Götzenberger in the Aula at Bonn. Journal I, f. 8v.

<sup>140</sup>In a letter to her father, Ellen Turner related a visit made by the Callcotts immediately post their honeymoon in which the couple showed their hosts the 950 sketches Callcott made during the tour. Trinity College, Cambridge, Dawson Turner Letters, P1/2.

<sup>141</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 5.



and the Priest - are again those of a nineteenth-century artist rather than one of the Trecento, and the illustration of the scene in the *Description* omits the flowering rod in Joseph's left hand in the original fresco (Figs. 104 and 105). What is perhaps more striking is the text relating to this fresco, in which the description of those secondary parts of the scene not included in Callcott's illustration is fairly inaccurate. The spurned suitors of the Virgin on the far left of the fresco are described as being "in actions of rage or despair, some appearing to threaten Joseph; and many are either breaking their rods, or throwing them indignantly away."<sup>142</sup> The action of the man immediately behind Joseph could, perhaps, be construed as threatening, due to his raised hand, but if this is indeed the case then this emotion is not reflected by his facial expression. Equally Giotto did not depict rage on the countenances of the other suitors. One wonders what caused the Callcotts to make this mistake. From the previously-quoted letter written by Maria to Dawson Turner it is clear that the Callcotts only had recourse to one other visual record of the Arena Chapel aside from their own notes and sketches: "I am glad you have Mr. Phillips' drawings, not one of which I ever saw. I rather think he believes he showed them to me: but he never did. The only sketches I have seen besides our own are a few made by Mr. Passavant, the German artist".<sup>143</sup> This must have been during Passavant's visit to England a few years previously; it has proven impossible at this stage to trace these sketches, but it would be fascinating to compare them with those of Callcott and evaluate whether the former influenced the *Description* in any way.

From page six onwards, Callcott eschewed group compositions and selected only single figures for the remainder of the illustrations. He had already, apart from in the single example of the illustration of the *Meeting at the Golden Gate*, divorced the figures from their settings in his copies.<sup>144</sup> The first of these individual figures is that of Christ from the *Raising of Lazarus*, a fresco which is named - but not commented on - in Callcott's notes. The accompanying description of the fresco reads: "In this composition, Giotto has shown that he could express the highest degree of dignity and majesty; the figure of the Saviour, as he pronounces the words, "Lazarus come forth", is almost sublime."<sup>145</sup> Callcott's Jesus in this scene appears far older than that of Giotto, and indeed one could almost argue that he appears older than Callcott's own evocation of Joseph in the illustration taken from the *Marriage of the Virgin* (Figs. 106 and 107). More problematic, however, is the misrepresentation of Christ's gesture in the scene. In that of Giotto, the index and middle fingers on his

<sup>142</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>143</sup>*Ibid.*, note 103.

<sup>144</sup>This could be seen as anticipating Richard Offner's view that the settings in the Arena Chapel frescoes are nearly always subordinate to the figures and, thus, expendable. Richard Offner, 'Giotto, Non-Giotto', *The Burlington Magazine*, 74 (1939), p. 260.

<sup>145</sup>Callcott, 1835, p. 8.

right hand are raised, and he is thus clearly the type of the Blessing Christ. Callcott, however, has only Christ's index finger raised, almost suggesting admonishment.<sup>146</sup> It seems more likely that the Callcotts were offering a reinterpretation of the Bible, perhaps more along the lines of something in accordance with Protestant doctrine, than that they were merely theologically or iconographically ignorant.<sup>147</sup> This interpretation is bolstered by the programmatic secularising of the relevant figures in Callcott's illustrations through the absence of the haloes present in Giotto's original frescoes.

The final three illustrations from the narrative frescoes seem calculated to display Giotto's employment of the entire figure to convey emotional states. The Callcotts identified the figure of St. John in the *Lamentation* as personifying "haste and despair", for example, but the expression of anguish on the saint's face in the original work is not fully realised in the nineteenth-century copy (Figs. 108 and 109).<sup>148</sup> The other two figures are those of Mary Magdalene from the *Resurrection* (Figs. 111 and 112) and the Virgin in the *Ascension* (Figs. 113 and 114), both of whom are represented in attitudes of devotion. Although these last two figures are, perhaps, the most 'like' of any of those illustrated by Callcott, what is fundamental in the case of this evocation of Giotto's Arena Chapel frescoes is that the illustrations plainly do not function as reasonable substitutes for the unavailable 'original' work of art. It is fascinating, therefore, that the reception of the *Description*, both in 1835 and 1845, seems to have been largely favourable, and influential to the extent that an illustration was essentially reproduced in a later text on early Italian art. This will be discussed in greater length in the final section of this chapter. On a closing note, however, there remains something to be said about the Callcotts' attitude to Giotto's use of colour, which ends the portion of the book devoted to the Arena Chapel frescoes:

The quantity of colour dispensed all over the chapel, reminds the spectator of the first pages of an illuminated missal, but it is far from being disagreeable; the same delicacy and taste which has given grace to Giotto's compositions, in spite of defective drawing, have bestowed beauty upon

<sup>146</sup>This illustration is flagged in the *Athenaeum* review of 1845, where Christ's gesture is interpreted as one of summoning. *Athenaeum*, 923 (1845) p. 770.

<sup>147</sup>Maria, for example, had written extensively about iconography in relation to Indian art in her publication on that country.

<sup>148</sup>Callcott was more successful in suggesting a degree of sadness, however, than John Skippe, whose full copy after the *Lamentation* in the British Museum (Fig. 110), made c. 1773, is notable for St. John's almost complete lack of expression. This drawing is part of an unpublished album held by the British Museum. Signed and dated 1773 by Skippe, the album comprises thirty-one pen and ink drawings with brown wash. The majority of those twenty-nine drawings in total are studies made after Mantegna's Ovetari chapel frescoes, executed by the artist between 1448 and approximately 1457 in the church of the Eremitani, Padua. See Kim Sloan, *A Noble Art*, exh. cat. (London: British Museum Press, 2000) pp. 180-181 for further analysis of the Skippe album.

the general colour; notwithstanding, it is evident that the Painter had little knowledge or dexterity in this part of his art.<sup>149</sup>

This damning with faint praise can perhaps best be understood when put in context of the Callcotts' Italian tour in 1827; prior to their visit to Padua they had, of course, spent almost three weeks saturated in the colours of the Venetian High Renaissance masters. This perhaps also offers another insight into their decision not to produce a colour plate volume, but does not correspond with Ruskin's later summing-up of Giotto's art as "pure Colour, noble Form, noble Thought".<sup>150</sup>

## The Reception and Influence of the Description.

Much of the previous section of this chapter was concerned with the multiple differences between Augustus Wall Callcott's illustrations and the original Arena Chapel frescoes. Without seeming contrary, however, this final section will argue that the *Description* was both a successful and influential publication which served, in various forms, to educate and habituate a wider public to the art of Giotto, despite initially being intended for a social and restricted consumption. It fulfilled this role primarily by being the first illustrated description of the Arena Chapel, preceding the monograph by Pietro Selvatico by a year, and it is this fact that can perhaps help us, from a twenty-first century standpoint, to understand why the *Description* was appreciated and indeed praised by the Callcotts' contemporaries.<sup>151</sup> Selvatico was also spurred to document the chapel through concern for its threatened existence, but interestingly, whilst his monograph easily surpasses that of the Callcotts in length and thus depth of analysis, its range of illustrations also does not extend to the full scope of the chapel. Selvatico supplied his readers with a plan of the chapel, plates of all fourteen virtues and vices and three pull-out illustrations of the *Meeting at the Golden Gate*, the *Raising of Lazarus* and the *Lamentation*.

That there had been no previous attempt to publish copies after the Arena Chapel was a source of surprise not only to Maria Callcott in the 1830s, but also, a number of years previously, to her friend and Callcott's fellow Academician David Wilkie. In a letter of November 6th 1826 written in Florence to Thomas Phillips, Wilkie described his visit to the chapel in glowing terms, finishing with

<sup>149</sup>Callcott, 1835, p. 14. It is worth questioning why, if the Callcotts thought Giotto's drawing defective, they opted to illustrate their work on him in the outline style, which highlighted his use of line.

<sup>150</sup>Ruskin, vol. 24, 1909, p. 40

<sup>151</sup>Pietro Selvatico, *Sulla cappellina degli Scrovegni nell'arena di Padova e sui freschi di Giotto in essa dipinti, osservazioni* (Padova, 1836). Selvatico later oversaw the 1868 restoration of the frescoes.

the query: “There being no prints, should not the Academy get a few drawings made of them?”<sup>152</sup> It was not, however, that Giotto was visually under-represented in British culture in the first decades of the nineteenth century; conversely, as has been previously intimated, the fame accorded to him by Vasari meant that there was a tendency amongst unscrupulous dealers in both Britain and Italy to pass off as his any work that appeared vaguely medieval.<sup>153</sup> Thus Giotto as an artistic personality was an entirely different construct then from now, and this is rendered perhaps even more ironic when one considers that, of the small nucleus of works about which there is contemporary scholarly consensus - the frescoes of the Arena Chapel, those in the Bardi and Peruzzi chapels in Santa Croce, Florence and the Ognissanti Madonna, the panel now in the Uffizi - none were really known as Giottos by the wider British public until the mid nineteenth century, being either unknown or covered over.<sup>154</sup>

It is unsurprising that those letters acknowledging receipt of the *Description* surviving in Maria’s own copy of the volume, now in the National Art Library, are extremely positive about the work. These thank you letters were from the expected mixture of artists, collectors and literary individuals, some of whom are now specifically known for their interest in the primitives - Dawson Turner, the Rev. Alexander Dyce and Thomas Phillips, for example. One can only wonder what Phillips’s true response to the Callcott volume was; as has already been mentioned, Phillips had seen and sketched the Arena Chapel frescoes himself whilst in Italy with his fellow artist William Hilton, and wrote at the time to Dawson Turner of his and Hilton’s appreciation of the frescoes: “Giotto is indeed in full feather as you say at Padua. How truly beautiful and delightful is the feeling manifested in the Cappello[sic] d’Arena. We were both enchanted there and remained many hours and repeated our visit and eve[n] now I regret that we did not re-repeat it.”<sup>155</sup> Furthermore,

<sup>152</sup>Cunningham, vol. 2., 1843, p. 370.

<sup>153</sup>According to the Getty Provenance Index Database of Sale Catalogues, there were over fifty Giottos in Britain in the period 1775 and 1840. This total excludes both those works collected by British connoisseurs whilst travelling or living abroad and also drawings attributed to Giotto. A comment in Maria’s aforementioned letter to Dawson Turner intimates her awareness of this problem: “I have wondered, I own, that so few drawings have been made after Giotto’s genuine work.” *Ibid.*, note 103.

<sup>154</sup>The Santa Croce frescoes were covered with whitewash until the mid nineteenth century. The difficulty of accessing the Arena Chapel in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was noted in Chapter 4. At the time of the Callcotts’ visit, the key was kept by the fathers of the neighbouring church, the Eremitani. Maria Callcott, Notes entitled ‘Beginnings of heads of our tour in 1827’, Bodleian MSS. Eng. d. 2279, f. 6v.

<sup>155</sup>Thomas Phillips to Dawson Turner, 28th October 1825, Trinity College, Cambridge, Dawson Turner Letters, MS. 013.30 no.65. The acknowledgement letter in the NAL copy of the *Description* is in the typical vein and praises the Callcotts for their efforts. Phillips did venture to offer some criticism, although this is only directed at the text, and even then only that small section describing the actions and attitudes of the Virtue and Vice panels. Following his comments, Phillips wrote: “Pray pardon my presumption. You have in what is done added a valuable page to the history of Art, & it is to be wished that Artists may be led by it to contemplate the excellent qualities of

according to the sale catalogue of his collection, Turner enriched his copy of the *Description* with copies by his daughter after Phillips's studies of the frescoes.<sup>156</sup> Was this due to a perception of an inadequacy in Callcott's illustrations? Gustav Friedrich Waagen also publicly praised the *Description* in strong terms, and particularly the subjects of the illustrations and their quality: "[Mrs Callcott] presented me with a description, lately published by her, of the paintings by Giotto in the Chapel dell'Annunziata dell'Arena, at Padua, in which her ingenious observations are illustrated and confirmed by admirable woodcuts of the finest figures and most striking parts, after drawings by Mr. Callcott."<sup>157</sup> The appreciation for Callcott's illustrations can undoubtedly be explained by their being outline drawings, and indeed in following a similar methodology to that popularised by Flaxman, Callcott's illustrations of the Arena Chapel frescoes had the positive effect, in the opinion of the *Athenaeum* reviewer (in 1845, on the occasion of the *Description* reaching a public audience) of having "got rid of the gothic features of Giotto's drawing, but ... preserved those infinitely higher qualities of Giotto's devotional sentiment."<sup>158</sup>

When one cuts out the passages appropriating Maria's own words, the *Athenaeum* review of the *Description* is fairly brief. Its highest praise is reserved for the illustration depicting Mary Magdalene from the *Resurrection* fresco: "we know of nothing so simple which is more elevating."<sup>159</sup> Of more importance, however, is the penultimate paragraph of the review, which demonstrates that the Callcotts' publication was by no means an isolated endeavour of minimal impact, but rather entered into the contemporary discourse concerning the future of the English school of art, and particularly its recent engagement with the practice of fresco painting:

The subjects in Giotto's Chapel are just of that class of which good copies should be made for our National Gallery, as Mr. Eastlake suggests, and they would turn to good account among our artists who are commencing the practice of mural decoration, which will doubtless extend from Palaces into the Churches again. It is impossible to have the originals, and it would be most desirable to have copies made whilst the

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the pictures you have described, & learn to cheque the licentious character of modern taste; which leads them far astray from the pure precepts on which good taste is founded." NAL II. 99. F. 7.

<sup>156</sup>This is mentioned in Donata Levi's aforementioned article on Lasinio, 1993, p. 136, fn. 30. Dawson Turner's copy of the *Description* is possibly that now recorded lost by the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, so assessing Phillips's sketches has not been possible. However, the sketchbook of his travelling companion, William Hilton, has survived in the British Museum (BMPL 1873,1213.1758-1775) and contains a number of drawings after Giotto's frescoes (Figs. 115 and 116)

<sup>157</sup>Gustav Friedrich Waagen, *Works of Art and Artists in England*, vol. I. (London: John Murray, 1838) p. 155. The meeting at which Maria gave Waagen a copy of her work took place in June 1835.

<sup>158</sup>*Athenaeum*, 2 August 1845, p. 770. The author of this review is unknown.

<sup>159</sup>*Ibid.*

originals are in a good state.<sup>160</sup>

Furthermore, the review of the *Description* was immediately succeeded by a piece entitled “Decoration of the New Houses of Parliament”. The attempt to foster a British school of fresco painting through the state-sponsored decoration in this medium of one of the most important buildings in the country became an all-consuming concern in the cultural politics of the 1840s, which thus rendered the Callcotts’ account of a similar internal decorative scheme significant.<sup>161</sup> The connections with the Callcotts run yet deeper, thanks to their honeymoon; the report of the 1841 Select Committee on Fine Arts, which questioned Charles Eastlake, amongst others, about the validity of the Westminster project, recommended that the state-sponsored artistic patronage of Ludwig I of Bavaria be taken as England’s guide in their enterprise, and none other than the German Catholic artist Peter Cornelius, visiting London in the same year, gave his own report on fresco technique for the guidance of the British artists. That Callcott was invited to be a judge for the fresco subject competition in 1843 indicates how learned his contemporaries considered him on this subject.<sup>162</sup>

A more tangible indicator of the influence of the *Description* is found in the appropriation of one of Callcott’s illustrations by Anna Jameson. Thus far, no evidence has been brought to light regarding her relationship with the Callcotts but there must indeed have been one, given their shared interests and the friendship between Jameson and Charles Eastlake, whose own wife would later complete and publish an unfinished work of Jameson’s after her death. As already noted in Chapter 6 of this thesis, in 1843 Jameson published a ‘life’ of Giotto in the populist *Penny Magazine*. The format and expectations of the publisher of this periodical thus account for the somewhat superficial treatment of some of the major works of the subjects, and this is clear in Mrs Jameson’s account of the Arena Chapel, which takes up only a paragraph in her three-page essay on Giotto; anecdotal information comprises a large part of the text.<sup>163</sup> Even then, her critique was only of the Callcott publication, and not the chapel itself, thereby essentially directing her readership of approximately twenty thousand to that work should they wish to obtain a greater knowledge of the monument and its decoration. Undoubtedly, the lack of reference to the Selvatico monograph was coloured by the capabilities

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<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.* The following chapters will further investigate the rhetoric surrounding fresco in the first half of the nineteenth century.

<sup>161</sup> As the *Athenaeum* put it in 1844, a “prevailing national mania for fresco” had the country in a “fine frenzy”. *Athenaeum* (December 1844) p. 1121.

<sup>162</sup> Callcott declined this role due to ill-health. His great-nephew, John Callcott Horsley, was one of the successful applicants and executed two of the frescoes between 1844 and 1845. The influence of the Callcotts on their young relation begs further research. They are, of course, referred to in the latter’s autobiography but do not play starring roles during his formative years.

<sup>163</sup> Anna Jameson, ‘Essay on the lives of remarkable painters, no. iii Giotto’, *Penny Magazine*, 12 (1843), p. 91.

of her readers, who would have been unlikely to be fluent in Italian.<sup>164</sup> The tone of Jameson's brief description of the Callcott volume is entirely positive, though, particularly in relation to the illustrations: "Of [the Arena] chapel the late Lady Callcott published an interesting account: there is exceeding grace and simplicity in some of the outline groups with which her work is illustrated, particularly the Marriage of the Virgin and St. Joseph."<sup>165</sup>

This sentence is repeated verbatim in Jameson's 1845 publication *Memoirs of the Early Italian Painters*, a collation of (extended versions of) the *Penny Magazine* essays into two volumes. In the *Memoirs*, Jameson did not expand her account of the Arena Chapel, but did add an illustration which bears a striking resemblance to one of Callcott's. This is the single figure of the Virgin from the fresco illustrating the wedding procession (Fig. 118), of which Callcott depicted the entire procession (Fig. 117). It is titled simply "A figure from the marriage Procession of the Virgin. Painted by Giotto on the walls of the Chapel of the Arena at Padua." In comparing this figure with the female figures in both the original fresco (Fig. 119) and Callcott's copy of the scene, it is clear that Jameson's unidentified figure is (presumably a copy of) Callcott's Virgin. The action of the hands of both figures is the same, as is their hairstyle, but both nineteenth-century versions have also fundamentally lost what could be termed as the 'rustic monumentality' of Giotto's Virgin in their features and the delineation of their physical mass. If Jameson had not visited the Arena chapel herself, the Callcotts' *Description* would likely have been the only visual record of the chapel available to her at the time. It is interesting, however, that earlier on in the Giotto essay, in reference to its pictorial heading of two angels, she had acknowledged her use of Thomas Patch's copies after the purported Giotto fresco cycle in Santa Maria del Carmine.<sup>166</sup> If indeed she employed the same method when it came to including an illustration relating to the Arena Chapel, why did she not acknowledge her source on this occasion?

Jameson's praise of the *Description* and its illustrations, coupled with her own copied illustration, reoccurs in the second edition of the *Memoirs*, published in 1858. In the third edition of the following year, however, the section concerning the Arena Chapel decoration still references the *Description*, but with an important qualification:

In Padua Giotto painted the chapel of the Arena, with frescoes from

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<sup>164</sup> Anna Jameson herself read Italian fluently, but perhaps Selvatico's monograph was not widely accessible in England in the early 1840s. The RA did not buy a copy until 1848 (RA Council Minutes, X, 1848 March 31).

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, note 147.

<sup>166</sup> Jameson's copy of Patch's angels originated in the *Penny Magazine*. *Ibid.*, note 147, p. 89.

the history of Christ and the Virgin, in fifty square compartments. Of this chapel the late Lady Callcott published an interesting account, illustrated from drawings made by Sir Augustus Callcott. These however are superseded by the set of drawings engraved on wood, and published by the Arundel Society, which, besides their beauty and conscientious accuracy, have the advantage of being described and commented on by Mr Ruskin.”<sup>167</sup>

From this year onwards, the drawing of a female figure - the Virgin - is no longer included in the book. The Arundel Society project spanned almost a decade, and saw full-scale woodcut engravings of every single fresco scene in the cycle, accompanied by an erudite and scholarly essay (in three parts) written by John Ruskin. It unequivocally trumped its much smaller and less ambitious predecessor. In the essay, published in 1853, which precedes Ruskin’s detailed individual analyses of the frescoes, the author declared his aim to be a revisionist one, based on the desire to rescue Giotto from the traditionally romanticised portrayal of him - deriving from Vasari’s anecdotally-laden biography in the *Lives* - and distil the essence of his artistic achievements.<sup>168</sup> Ruskin credited the treatment of Giotto in Lord Lindsay’s *Sketches of the History of Christian Art* (1847) as one of his major sources of information, which makes it rather surprising that when he discussed the Arena Chapel itself, a mention of the Callcotts’ *Description* is nowhere in evidence - Lindsay, following Jameson, had referenced it in a footnote to his discussion of the Arena Chapel, mentioning that it had recently been published.<sup>169</sup> Perhaps Ruskin’s well-documented disregard for Anna Jameson as an art historian coloured his judgement in this matter, and her endorsement of Callcott’s illustrations stopped him from mentioning the *Description* in his essay. More likely, of course, is that the comprehensiveness of Selvatico’s monograph, which Ruskin did reference, rendered the Callcott’s introduction to the chapel unimportant for him.

Despite the frequent absence of visual fidelity in Augustus Wall Callcott’s copies (a generally unpardonable sin for Ruskin), the understanding of Giotto propounded in the *Description* is analogous to Ruskin’s in the most fundamental way. Both authors stressed that Giotto was really the first artist to look to nature and to strive to combine naturalism with deep religious feeling, a characterisation that was entirely entirely inimical to the Rioist school of thought.<sup>170</sup> Furthermore, the

<sup>167</sup>Jameson, 1859, p. 25.

<sup>168</sup>See Tanya Ledger, *A Study of the Arundel Society, 1848-97* (unpublished D. Phil. Thesis, University of Oxford, 1978) and Plampin, 2005, pp. 59-78.

<sup>169</sup>Alexander Crawford, *Sketches of the History of Christian Art*, vol. II (London, 1847) p. 184.

<sup>170</sup>Ruskin’s Giotto was an artist who had “a stern and just respect for truth”; an assertion that related both to the artist’s interest in naturalism and his faithful adherence to the scriptures in the devising of the Arena Chapel fresco programme.



Callcotts' clear conservationist concerns, and their decision to take a practical step to alleviate these, anticipated both the concerns and activities set out in the Arundel Society's prospectus by over a decade. Perhaps the final word on their achievement - and it should indeed be considered so - should be left to one of their contemporaries. Fanny Trollope was a middle-class travel writer and novelist - exactly the intended 'public' whose taste the National Gallery was aiming to improve - who, in 1842, published an account of her Italian tour titled *A Visit to Italy*. Her section on the Arena Chapel, in no way notable or differing from similar accounts of the period, ends simply: "I would have given much to have had [the Callcotts'] splendid pages with me at Padua."<sup>171</sup> In the same way as Ruskin's *Stones of Venice* became the ultimate authority for a traveller's appreciation and understanding of that city's monuments, and Lucy Honeychurch in E.M. Forster's *A Room with a View* had to make recourse to her Baedeker in order to ensure she was "feeling what was proper" when contemplating Giotto's frescoes in Santa Croce, the Callcotts' publication was the first to perform the role of guide and conduit to the Arena Chapel frescoes, if sadly not for Mrs Trollope.<sup>172</sup>

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Aside from the formal differences between the engravings of Patch and Callcott, the most striking divergence in the respective approaches to early Italian art embodied in their publications is the absence of a religious framework in the earlier and the dominance of one in the latter. For the Callcotts, it was Giotto's "deep, quiet feeling" - the sincerity of his religious faith - which provided the handle for their appreciation of his work. As has already been remarked, the religious nature of the frescoes the Callcotts were publicising was foregrounded by the inclusion of scripture to preface the descriptions of the individual works.<sup>173</sup> Though the journals of both husband and wife express a deep interest in issues of technique, expression was paramount.<sup>174</sup> The previous chapter demonstrated that Patch's focus was, conversely, on naturalism and historiographical issues. His volumes are, in fact, dis-

<sup>171</sup>Mrs Trollope, *A Visit to Italy*, vol. II (London, 1842) p. 62.

<sup>172</sup>See Graham Smith, 'Florence, Photography and the Victorians', in *Victorian and Edwardian Responses to the Italian Renaissance*, John Law and Lene Østermark-Johansen, eds. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005) p. 7.

<sup>173</sup>Caroline Palmer's important thesis chapter on Maria Callcott explores her role as an early female writer on art, discussing and analysing the strategies she employed to facilitate her writings. As this chapter has intimated and Palmer argues, the Callcotts' response to Giotto presages the Ruskinian approach to early Italian art. Palmer does not note, however, that the *Description's* foregrounding of the moral and religious character of Giotto can be understood as anticipating the common nineteenth-century argument that superlative religious art could only be created by truly devout artists. See Palmer, 2009, esp. Chapter Six.

<sup>174</sup>Moreover, this manner of judging artworks was not exclusive to early Italian art; as Gotch highlighted, Maria complained about the lack of narrative focus in Veronese's *Feast of St Gregory* (Gotch, 1937, p. 262). She described it as "a most beautiful picture as a work of art but [as] defective in being merely a conversation piece - instead of having the attention directed to the moment of the discovery of the Miracle." (Journal III, f. 25r).

tinguished by a complete lack of religious interpretation, despite the fact that the artworks he engraved and discussed were all based on biblical sources.<sup>175</sup> This accords with David Bindman's observation that no extant evidence either supports or precedes the assertion made in the first comprehensive biography of William Blake (who is the subject of the next chapter in this thesis) that the artist's attraction to the tombs in Westminster Abbey, which he engraved as a student in the 1770s, was mediated by his faith. Alexander Gilchrist wrote that Blake "pored over all [the Westminster tombs] with a reverent good faith, which, in the age of Stuart and Revett, taught the simple student things our Pugins and Scotts had to learn near a century later."<sup>176</sup> As Bindman pointed out, Gilchrist's conception of Blake's interest in medieval tomb sculpture was filtered through the prism of the Victorian attitude to the Gothic, and in fact did not accord with the brief mention of this strand of Blake's activities in the earliest account of him, which revealed that Blake was attracted to the formal - i.e. aesthetic - qualities of the sculpture.<sup>177</sup> Thus the Callcotts and Patch represent two points on the spectrum with regard to changing artistic values in the period under examination. It is noteworthy, however, that their respective researches had no demonstrable impact upon their primary artistic *oeuvres* in either case, not in terms of style, subject matter nor technique. No extant paintings or drawings - nor records of now lost works - by Patch or Callcott testify to their having been practically influenced by early Italian art. However, the next part of this thesis will focus on two artists whose interest in the Italian primitives did manifest itself directly in their artistic practice.

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<sup>175</sup>There is so little corollary information regarding Patch that making a definitive statement regarding his religious inclinations is nigh-on impossible.

<sup>176</sup>Alexander Gilchrist, *Life of William Blake*, "*Pictor Ignotus*", vol. 1 (London: Macmillan and Co., 1863) p. 18.

<sup>177</sup>David Bindman, 'Blake's "Gothicised Imagination" and the History of England', in Morton Paley and Michael Phillips, eds., *William Blake: Essays in honour of Sir G. Keynes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973) pp. 29-49. This earlier account that Bindman refers to was written by a close acquaintance of Blake's and published in 1806, when the artist was nearing fifty. Blake's equation between Christianity and Gothic art, which pervades his extant writings, is generally located to around this period on the basis of a letter written by the artist to a close patron in which he describes a spiritual crisis and subsequent renewal.

## Part III: Artistic Responses

## Chapter 8

# The (Re)Discovery of Fresco Painting in Nineteenth-Century Britain, Part I: The Contribution of William Blake.

In an era of academies, associations, and combined efforts, we have in [William Blake] a solitary, self-taught, and as an artist, *semi*-taught Dreamer, ‘delivering the burning messages of prophecy by the stammering lips of infancy,’ as Mr. Ruskin has said of Cimabue and Giotto.<sup>1</sup>

Alexander Gilchrist’s association of William Blake (Fig. 120) with Cimabue and Giotto at the outset of his *Life of William Blake, “Pictor Ignotus”*, published in 1863 as the first full-length biography devoted to the artist, is revealing as a marker of the progression of the rediscovery of the primitives.<sup>2</sup> It is further augmented by

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<sup>1</sup>Gilchrist, vol. I, 1863, p. 3. This characterisation of Blake (as a naïf visionary disconnected from his time, which essentially derives from Allan Cunningham’s revised, more sympathetic account of Blake’s life in the second edition of his *Lives of the Most Eminent British Painters, Sculptors, and Architects* (London: John Murray, 1830-1833), had currency for almost a century following the publication of Gilchrist’s biography. Twentieth-century scholarship, however, has sought to locate Blake firmly within his contemporary historical and cultural context and, moreover, to emphasise an intellectual Blake, through demonstrating that his writings and designs were born as equally from a wide-ranging knowledge and intense study of literature and art as from his imagination. Exemplary works in this tradition, from a variety of perspectives, include David Erdman, *Blake: Prophet Against Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954), David Bindman, *William Blake: His Art and Times*, exh. cat. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1982) and Jon Mee, *Dangerous enthusiasm: William Blake and the culture of radicalism in the 1790s* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

<sup>2</sup>It is notable that Gilchrist’s *Life* was published by a high-status publishing company, Macmillan and Co., known for its representation of major literary figures such as Tennyson, Yeats and Hardy. Indeed the close ties between the Macmillan publishing house and Francis Turner Palgrave (1824-97), an art critic known for his vocal support of Pre-Raphaelite artists, could be seen to neatly reflect or bridge Blake’s two expressive idioms - literary and artistic. Whether or not there was a connection

the collaboration of the Rossetti brothers on the completion of the work following Gilchrist's unexpected death in 1861.<sup>3</sup> One of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's major contributions to the biography was his description and assessment of Blake's *Illustrations of the Book of Job* (1826), a volume of engravings based on an earlier series of watercolours executed for Thomas Butts and patronised by the younger artist John Linnell (Fig. 121).<sup>4</sup> Rossetti read some of the Job engravings as having "in spirit and character ... more real affinity, perhaps, with Orcagna than with any other of the greatest men. In their unison of natural study with imagination, they remind one decidedly of him".<sup>5</sup> Rossetti's knowledge of Orcagna probably derived primarily from the wrongly-attributed (on the authority of Vasari) plates in Carlo Lasinio's *Pitture a fresco del Campo Santo di Pisa* (first published in 1812, in a second edition in 1828 and reissued by Lasinio's son in 1832) or as reproduced in Anna Jameson's *Memoirs of Early Italian Painters*. The British Museum also owned, from 1845, two very early engravings after the most famous of the Orcagna-attributed frescoes at Pisa (the *Last Judgement*) and, from 1857, the *Imperiale e reale Galleria di Firenze*, which included a plate depicting an annunciation then given to the artist.<sup>6</sup> Finally, Rossetti may, perhaps, have had authentic visual knowledge of Orcagna through Alfred Stevens's sketches after the Strozzi chapel frescoes and altarpiece.<sup>7</sup> Ros-

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between Palgrave and the Blake life may well be a potential fruitful avenue for further research. As Gwenllian Palgrave's account of her father's life and works relates, Palgrave developed an interest in Blake early on (a transcribed letter from Palgrave to his mother dated to 1845 demonstrates an appreciation of Blake's Job engravings) and was a substantial purchaser at the Butts' family sale of Blake's works in 1852, where he bought the tempera *The Body of Christ Borne to the Tomb* and later presented it to the National Gallery (now in the Tate). See Gwenllian Florence Palgrave, *Francis Turner Palgrave; his journals and memories of his life* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1899).

<sup>3</sup>A preface to the life, written by Gilchrist's wife, details the fever which occasioned the author's death "in the full tide of health and work and happy life" (Gilchrist, vol. 1, p. v). Gilchrist, who studied law but tried to make a living as an art critic, died at the young age of thirty-three. Anne Gilchrist specified that her husband had completed much of the work, but that the Rossettis made the substantial and valuable contributions of the 'second part' - which comprised edited selections of Blake's writings (Dante Gabriel Rossetti) and the annotated catalogue of Blake's artworks (William Rossetti).

<sup>4</sup>A particularly esteemed analysis of this series is Bo Lindberg, *William Blake's Illustrations to the Book of Job* (Åbo: Åbo akademi, 1973). For an account focused on the materiality of the Job volume, see Michael Phillips, 'The Printing of Blake's Illustrations of the Book of Job', *Print Quarterly*, 22 (June 2005) pp. 138-159.

<sup>5</sup>Gilchrist, vol. I, p. 290. As Rossetti himself acknowledged, his published appreciation of the Job engravings was anticipated in 1857 - and perhaps catalysed - by Ruskin's referencing them in the list appended to his *The Elements of Drawing*, which was headed 'Things to be Studied'. Ruskin described the Job engravings as "of the highest rank in certain characters of imagination and expression", and draw an analogy between the engravings of Blake and Rembrandt to Blake's advantage. John Ruskin, *The Elements of Drawing; in Three Letters to Beginners* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1857) p. 342.

<sup>6</sup>This painting is now given to Mariotto di Nardo. British Museum 1857,0411.72. Orcagna's far greater prominence in the nineteenth century (compared to now) is due to many such changes in attribution.

<sup>7</sup>Stevens (1817-75), a sculptor and medallist, spent almost a decade in Italy from 1833, where he received some training at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Florence. His sketches after Orcagna and

setti particularly esteemed the economy of Blake's design, but stressed that this did not amount to asceticism, the common charge levelled at Pre-Raphaelite artworks, dwelling particularly on the beauty of Blake's female figures: "And that the ascetic tendency, here happily absent, is not the inseparable penalty to be paid for a love of the Gothic forms of beauty, is evident enough."<sup>8</sup> The reference to similarity in "spirit and character" and the marriage of the study of nature with the products of the imagination in Rossetti's comparison of Blake with Orcagna indicates that he probably had the Campo Santo frescoes in mind, however, due to the unusual and imaginative iconography evident in paintings such as *The Triumph of Death* and correspondences between the violence evident in the Campo Santo frescoes and the *terribilità* of some of the Job illustrations (Figs. 122 and 125). The juxtaposition of immobile dead bodies at the bottom of *The Triumph of Death* and the swooping winged figures in the top half of the composition (Fig. 123) finds an echo in the third plate of the Job engravings (Fig. 124), for example.

It is, perhaps, not unexpected for a founder member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood to assign, retrospectively, the influence of early Italian art to Blake, and for Gilchrist's comment to be the more equivocal of the two. More significant, however, is the transcription in Gilchrist of a letter written by Samuel Palmer, famously one of the young acolytes of Blake's later years, in which Palmer attested to Blake himself admitting to the influence of early Italian art: "[Blake] fervently loved the early Christian art, and dwelt with peculiar affection on the memory of Fra Angelico, often speaking of him as an inspired inventor and as a saint."<sup>9</sup> There is no corroborative evidence to suggest that Blake was drawn particularly to Fra Angelico but this certainly does not negate Palmer's memory (his letter to Gilchrist having been written three decades after his association with Blake): indeed, it makes perfect sense that Blake, whose belief that (in Northrop Frye's words) "art is the form of religion because it is the image of religion", felt a particular affinity with the artist characterised by Vasari as "having not been less excellent as a Painter and Illuminator, than as an Ecclesiastic."<sup>10</sup> The belief in the unity between art and religion is expressed perhaps most clearly in an aphorism appended by the artist to his engraving of the *Laocoön*: "A Poet, a Painter, a Musician, and Architect: the

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other early Italian artists are in the British Museum. See Mark Stocker, 'Stevens, Alfred George (1817-1875)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2009 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26420>, accessed 13 February 2013].

<sup>8</sup>Gilchrist, vol. I, p. 288.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 302.

<sup>10</sup>Northrop Frye, *Fearful Symmetry: A Study of William Blake* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947) p. 89. Giorgio Vasari, *The Life of Giovanni Angelico da Fiesole*, trans. Giovanni Bezzi (London: Arundel Society, 1850), p. 5. It is noteworthy that Blake seemed to be the instigator of the trend for Fra Angelico described by Gombrich as the "touchstone of the interest in the early Italians." Gombrich, 2002, p. 114.

Man Or Woman who is not one of these is not a Christian.” (Fig. 126) <sup>11</sup> Additionally, Fra Angelico’s status as the leading artist in Rome as well as Florence, the head of the biggest workshop in the latter city and executor of a series of prestigious commissions of fresco cycles may also have inclined Blake towards self-identification with him; much of this activity chimes with the aspirations of Blake for his own career, as manifested explicitly and implicitly in his writings.<sup>12</sup>

Blake’s supposed characterisation of Fra Angelico as an “inspired inventor and as a saint” can be related to the pervasive influence of Vasari who, in his life of the Italian artist, created and reinforced a narrative that intertwined Fra Angelico’s art and piety. In Vasari’s assessment, Fra Angelico’s material creations are consistently framed by his devout Christianity, evidenced by Vasari’s opening of the life with an emphasis on the construct of Fra Angelico’s name.<sup>13</sup> However, establishing Blake’s visual knowledge of Fra Angelico is difficult as he, like Rossetti, never went to Italy. There were a small number of engravings in existence after Angelico’s work, such as the plate in *Istoria Pratica* - published in 1778 by Stefano Molini - depicting the Virgin and Child being adored by St Catherine; Plate XXXII after Angelico’s *Christ the Judge* in Guglielmo della Valle’s *Stampe del Duomo di Orvieto* of 1791; or the outline engraving after Fra Angelico’s predella panels depicting episodes from the life of St Nicholas of Bari published as part of *I più celebri quadri delle diverse scuole italiane riuniti nell’appartamento Borgia del Vaticano* c. 1820 (Fig. 127). None of these, however, were in the Royal Academy’s library, and the examples now in the British Museum were, in all three cases, mid-nineteenth-century acquisitions, but this does not preclude Blake’s knowledge of them via personal dissemination amongst artists and connoisseurs. Another source of information about Fra Angelico is likely to have been John Flaxman, Blake’s contemporary as a student at the RA and a major facilitator of many of his biggest commissions, who spent seven years in Italy in the closing decades of the eighteenth century. As was referenced in Chapter 4, Flaxman particularly noted Fra Angelico’s Linaioli Tabernacle in the Uffizi. Although he described the angels surrounding the Virgin and Child as “ex-

<sup>11</sup>David Erdman, *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, rev. ed. (New York: Doubleday, 1988) p. 274.

<sup>12</sup>Blake’s desire to attract large-scale state patronage, particularly for monumental frescoes, can be seen as analogous to Fra Angelico’s work for the Medici (the decoration of the convent of San Marco) and the Pope (fresco cycles in the Vatican), for example.

<sup>13</sup>For example: “Some people claim that [Fra Angelico] never set his hand to a brush without first saying a prayer. He never painted a crucifix without the tears streaming down his cheeks” and “a panel ... of the Annunciation to Our Lady by the angel Gabriel painted in profile that is so devout, delicate, and well executed that it truly seems to have been created in Paradise than by a human hand.” Vasari, trans. Bondanella, 1991, pp. 177 and 171 respectively. ‘Angelico’ was given as a hagiographic appellation to the artist in 1469, fourteen years after his death. Strehlke suggests that this was a conscious linkage with Thomas Aquinas, founder of the Dominican order. Carl Brandon Strehlke, *Angelico (La Via Lattea)* (Milano: Jaca Book, 1998) p. 8.

tremely beautiful”, he found the figures of Saints John and Paul, on the interiors of the doors, “stiff & poor”.<sup>14</sup>

The references to early Italian art and artists elucidated above demonstrate that Blake’s followers and admirers saw his artistic *oeuvre* as interacting with that of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.<sup>15</sup> Establishing a definitive relationship between Blake and early Italian art has not been easy, however. First, it is a notable tendency of Blake scholarship that significantly more attention has been directed towards his literary than artistic output. Even as recently as 2009, on the occasion of the bicentenary recreation of Blake’s ill-fated one-man exhibition, Martin Myrone and David Blayney Brown asserted that “with some very notable exceptions, Blake’s visual art, certainly the paintings and watercolours, has been relatively neglected.”<sup>16</sup> Anthony Blunt was the first art historian to delve substantively into Blake’s “pictorial imagination” and offer concrete examples of his engaging in the artistic practice of emulation.<sup>17</sup> Blunt’s researches have been significantly augmented by more recent art historically-focused analyses, most notably by David Bindman.<sup>18</sup> Both Blunt and Bindman rightly stressed Blake’s voracious consumption of engravings and his attendance at auctions as the primary resources for his visual knowledge of Italian, French and Northern European art, particularly early on in his career when, as a middle-class engraving student, accessing the great private collections built up by the British cognoscenti would have been virtually impossible.<sup>19</sup> The unassailable fact of the paucity of early Italian artworks both on the market and in the form of reproductions, combined with the fact that Blake himself never left England, is undoubtedly why very few correspondences have been identified, or sought, between Blake’s painterly output and early Italian art. Furthermore, there are significant lacunae in our knowledge of the artist’s biography and activities, and with Blake in particular a tendency to be over-cautious in discussing the issue of influence can sometimes be discerned. But there are explicit clues in existing primary Blake material which point to the artist having a deeper and more productive relationship

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<sup>14</sup>Hugh Brigstocke, ‘Flaxman: Fitzwilliam Journal’, in Brigstocke, Marchand and Wright, eds., 2010, p. 98.

<sup>15</sup>This conceptualisation endured into the twentieth century; Roger Fry’s article on three of Blake’s tempera paintings draws analogies between Blake’s style and that of Giotto at the Arena Chapel. Roger Fry, ‘Three Pictures in Tempera by William Blake’, *The Burlington Magazine*, 4 (1903) pp. 205-211.

<sup>16</sup>David Blayney Brown and Martin Myrone, ‘William Blake’s 1809 Exhibition’, *Tate Papers*, 14 (2010), <http://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/william-blakes-1809-exhibition>.

<sup>17</sup>See Anthony Blunt, ‘Blake’s Pictorial Imagination’, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 6 (1943), pp. 190-212 and, for a more detailed explication of Blake’s career and influences, Anthony Blunt, *The Art of William Blake* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959).

<sup>18</sup>David Bindman, *Blake as an Artist* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).

<sup>19</sup>However, there was no sale of Blake’s studio or effects after his death, meaning that drawing up a canonical list of the books, prints and artworks owned by Blake has not been possible.



with early Italian art and artists than has hitherto been recognised.

One significant connection between Blake and the Italian primitives is his own positioning of himself as the inheritor of a painterly tradition particularly associated with early Italian art - fresco painting.<sup>20</sup> In the latter half of 1809, Blake published an advertisement for his one-man exhibition in which he declared that he was mounting an “Exhibition of *Paintings in Fresco*, Poetical and Historical Inventions.” (Fig. 128)<sup>21</sup> The artist then subsequently asserted - in an advertisement for the *Descriptive Catalogue* he produced to accompany the exhibition - that his paintings demonstrated “THE grand style of Art restored; in FRESCO.”<sup>22</sup> Using the first floor of his brother’s hosiery shop in Golden Square, Soho, as the venue, Blake exhibited sixteen works; the catalogue lists nine paintings designated “frescoes” (three of which are given the additional appellation of “experiment pictures”), followed by seven watercolours, classified by Blake as ‘drawings’ (Figs. 129, 130 and 131). The slippage between ‘watercolour’ and ‘drawing’ in the *Descriptive Catalogue* is paralleled by that between ‘watercolour’ and ‘fresco’ first in Blake’s *Advertisement* and then throughout the *Descriptive Catalogue*. Blake’s paintings themselves, moreover, further undermine the stability of his usage of the term ‘fresco’, as what he actually produced and designated ‘fresco’ was a form of tempera.<sup>23</sup>

In mounting this exhibition, which essentially comprised a retrospective of his career, Blake was hoping to attract the large-scale state patronage that he believed he had hitherto been unfairly denied.<sup>24</sup> It is fair to say, however, that his

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<sup>20</sup>See, for example, Aglionby’s dialogue between a traveller and a friend, in which the former informs the latter that “the Italians have a Way of Painting their Pallaces, both within and without, upon the bear walls; and before Oyl Painting came up, most Masters wrought that way.” Aglionby, 1719, pp. 24-25. A further example of the correlative lack of knowledge regarding both fresco painting and the early Italians is the fact that as late as 1794, on the occasion of the presentation of a series of paintings to the Corporation of the City of London, the alderman and art patron John Boydell deemed it necessary to give a definition of the term ‘fresco’ in the accompanying catalogue. See *A Description of Several Pictures presented to the Corporation of the City of London, by John Boydell* (London, 1794).

<sup>21</sup>Erdman, 1988, p. 526. Specific literature on the exhibition includes: Troy Patenaude, “‘The glory of a Nation’: Recovering William Blake’s 1809 exhibition”, *British Art Journal*, 4 (2002), pp. 52-62; Blayney Brown and Myrone, 2010; Philippa Simpson, ‘Lost in the Crowd: Blake and London in 1809’, *Tate Papers*, 14 (2010), <http://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/william-blakes-1809-exhibition>; Susan Matthews, ‘An Alternative National Gallery: Blake’s 1809 Exhibition and the Attack on Evangelical Culture’, *Ibid.*; Konstantinos Stefanis, ‘Reasoned Exhibitions: Blake in 1809 and Reynolds in 1813’, *Ibid.* and, finally, Martin Myrone, *Seen in my visions: a descriptive catalogue of pictures*, (London: Tate Publishing, 2009), which includes a facsimile reprint of Blake’s *Descriptive Catalogue*.

<sup>22</sup>Erdman, 1988, p. 528.

<sup>23</sup>Blake’s medium shall be explored later in this chapter.

<sup>24</sup>Blake’s exhibition advertisement stated that his aim was to force those “Noblemen and Gentlemen ... Subscribers” of the Royal Academy and British Institution to do him the “justice” of examining his works which were, according to him, excluded from those institutions’ exhibitions by virtue of their medium. *Ibid.*, p. 527. As numerous scholars have pointed out, Blake’s watercolours

exhibition was by no means an unqualified success.<sup>25</sup> As Blayney Brown and Myrone again pointed out, it is now very “hard to imagine that the chance to see a gathering of [Blake’s] works curated by the artist himself could have been so completely overlooked and misunderstood.”<sup>26</sup> Over the last decade or so, however, there has been a discernible surge of interest in this episode of Blake’s career which has engendered discussion of the materiality of his work, and particularly his forays into ‘fresco’ painting. Much of this discussion has revolved around the technical aspects of Blake’s painterly invention, and more remains to be extrapolated from the works themselves and related material about the artist’s intentions.<sup>27</sup>

The focus of much of this chapter will be Blake’s claim that he had “recovered” the “lost art” of fresco painting.<sup>28</sup> It will explore and offer answers to the following three crucial and interrelated questions: how much Blake knew about fresco painting, both visually and textually; whether he was aware that the medium he utilised was not, in fact, fresco; and, if so, what his agenda may have been in appropriating the term. In doing so, this chapter aims to combat the general assumption that Blake seems to have just made a mistake in his usage of this particular artistic terminology.<sup>29</sup> This investigation will be augmented by a discussion of Blake’s knowledge of early Italian art, touched on superficially by previous scholars but still awaiting rigorous examination. Exploring these questions in relation to Blake allows for the concomitant investigation of some of the wider contexts of fresco in Britain at the turn of the nineteenth century, and necessitates addressing broader issues surrounding theory and practice in relation to medium during the nascent period of the British school of painting. Overall, this chapter’s focus on Blake’s adoption of ‘fresco’ offers an introductory narrative, hitherto lacking, to the better-known engagement with fresco painting of later British artists such as William Dyce and the Pre-Raphaelites.

## Fresco in British academic theory and practice.

In his fifth discourse, delivered at the Royal Academy in December 1772, Joshua Reynolds exalted fresco as the highest of artistic media in which the most monu-

would have been and were, on other occasions, included in Royal Academy exhibitions, but just not displayed in the Great Hall.

<sup>25</sup>If Blake did not succeed in selling paintings, though, he did leave a significant debt to art history - the *Descriptive Catalogue*, written by the artist himself, which accompanied the exhibition and which represented a manifesto of sorts of his views on art.

<sup>26</sup>Blayney Brown and Myrone, 2010.

<sup>27</sup>See, for example, Robin Hamlyn and Joyce Townsend, eds., *William Blake: the painter at work*, exh. cat. (London: Tate Publishing, 2003).

<sup>28</sup>Erdman, 1988, p. 527.

<sup>29</sup>Evidence for this received opinion shall be given later in this chapter.

mental art had been produced:

The principal works of modern art are in *Fresco*; a mode of Painting which excludes attention to minute elegances: yet these works in Fresco, are the productions on which the fame of the greatest masters depend: such are the pictures of Michael Angelo and Raffaele in the Vatican, to which we may add the Cartoons; which, though not strictly to be called Fresco, yet may be put under that denomination; and such are the works of Giulio Romano at Mantua. If these performances were destroyed, with them would be lost the best part of the reputation of those illustrious masters; for these are justly considered as the greatest efforts of our art which the world can boast. To these, therefore, we should principally direct our attention for higher excellencies.<sup>30</sup>

The discourse continues by privileging Raphael's frescoes over his easel painting, maintaining the clear message that artists in training should choose those works - the frescos - to study first. Thus, just as Reynolds set up history painting - "this universal presiding idea of the art" - as the highest genre to which an artist could aspire in his third discourse, so too did he present fresco as the most highly-esteemed medium in the fifth discourse.<sup>31</sup>

Concomitant with this emphasis on fresco as the most suitable vehicle for elevated subjects is the lack of any technical discussion of it (or, indeed, any other media) in the discourses. As Rosie Dias has recently argued, British artists' knowledge of painting techniques and craftsmanship was far from assured, primarily due to these being "kept firmly off the agenda [at the Royal Academy] by more ideologically pressing concerns of taste, judgement, and acquaintance with the works of the Old Masters."<sup>32</sup> This approach was designed to cement the status of painting in Britain as a liberal art, and Reynolds's discourses were, as has been noted by a multitude of scholars, the oral expression of this overriding aim - a "statement of policy" for the institution, as Robert Wark conceptualised them.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, Reynolds was also very much aware of the fact that he was addressing leading connoisseurs and collectors in addition to endeavouring to instruct young artists for the benefit of the future English school, and therefore had a platform to inculcate interest in, and desire for, the productions of the current generation of mature artists. It is not surprising in this context that he should privilege the latter audience demographic in

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<sup>30</sup>Reynolds, ed. by Wark, 1975, p. 81.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>32</sup>Rosie Dias, 'Venetian Secrets: Benjamin West and the Contexts of Colour at the Royal Academy', in John Barrell, Mark Hallett and Sarah Monks (eds.), *Living with the Royal Academy: Artistic Ideals and Experiences in England, 1768-1848* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013) p. 156.

<sup>33</sup>Reynolds, ed. by Wark, 1975, p. xiv.

foregoing detailed explication of technical instruction, which would have the effect of reminding his audience of the fundamentally manual origins of artworks, for more generalised discussion of the potential and greatest achievements of the visual arts.<sup>34</sup>

Such an approach, which engendered a varying spectrum of knowledge concerning painting materials and techniques, was undoubtedly a casual factor in the term ‘fresco’ being used, as Edward Croft-Murray noted, “frequently and quite indiscriminately”.<sup>35</sup> The lack of clarity regarding what constituted *buon fresco* (pigments mixed with water and applied to wet plaster) versus *fresco secco* (painting carried out on dry, rather than wet, plaster) and even tempera (the binding of pigments with egg, animal glue-size or water-soluble vegetable gums) mirrored the ignorance regarding the proper use of oil as a vehicle displayed by some British artists into the nineteenth century.<sup>36</sup> British artists also, of course, had very little opportunity of gathering empirical evidence relating to wall painting if they did not travel to Italy. Although there is evidence that true fresco was practised in England in the medieval era, most examples were destroyed during the Reformation, and the celebrated monumental wall paintings of the seventeenth century - Rubens’s Whitehall Ceiling and works by Verrio, for example - were executed in oil on canvas or plaster.<sup>37</sup> The climate of England was long recognised as an impediment to the successful execution of *buon fresco*. It is possible that there was a subtext to Reynolds’s lauding of that medium along the lines of James Barry’s interpretation of the reluctance of the Royal Academicians in the 1780s and 1790s to devote funds to forming a collection of artworks for the instruction of students as a strategy to prevent the exposure of their own inferiority.<sup>38</sup> Exhorting students - and connoisseurs - to regard fresco as the most elevated medium for painting necessarily allowed for the avoidance of any invidious comparison between the celebrated works of the Italian school and those of the British, as the latter - through no fault of its own - was unable to mobilise the medium.

However, the over-enthusiastic application of the term ‘fresco’ to artworks of a multiplicity of media further evidences the high artistic and cultural currency

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<sup>34</sup>As Dias also pointed out, this attitude was additionally reflected in Reynolds’s personal artistic practice: the artist would hide himself away in his painting room so as to both prevent his students and fellow artists from discovering his technical secrets and create an aura of mystique around his creative process. Dias, 2013, pp. 154-180.

<sup>35</sup>Edward Croft-Murray, *Decorative Painting in England 1537-1837*, vol. I. (London: Country Life, 1962) p. 275.

<sup>36</sup>Dias cited the example given by Benjamin Robert Haydon in his *Autobiography* regarding Wilkie instructing him to use raw, rather than boiled, oil in 1807. Dias, 2013, p. 160.

<sup>37</sup>Croft-Murray, vol. I., 1962, p. 275.

<sup>38</sup>William Pressly, *The Life and Art of James Barry* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981) pp. 137-138.

attached to it. John Evelyn's simultaneous claiming and rejection of the status of fresco for a monumental *Resurrection* (Fig. 132) by the history and portrait painter Isaac Fuller in All Souls College, Oxford, for example, demonstrates the value the term denoted. Evelyn recorded that during a stay in Oxford in 1664 he went "to see the Picture on the Wall over the Altar at All-Soules, being the largest piece of Fresco painting (or rather in Imitation of it, for tis in oyle [of Terpentine]) in England, & not ill-design'd."<sup>39</sup> Imitating the appearance and effect of fresco painting became a widespread practice in British painting of the following century, developing from the Italian Baroque practice of executing large-scale paintings in oil on canvas with the express purpose of fixing them to a pre-destined wall. In doing so, the qualities of monumentality and the especial skill perceived to be particular to fresco painting (it being a particularly demanding technical process in terms of scale, the manufacturing of plaster and paint and the application of paint to wet plaster with no recourse to corrections) were harmonised with the painterly effects that could be achieved through applying oil to canvas.

James Barry's *magnus opus*, the remarkable series of six paintings entitled *The Progress of Human Culture* (Figs. 133 and 134) executed for the Great Room of the Royal Society of Arts at the Adelphi between 1777 and 1784, is one of the greatest exemplars of this art form, and has perhaps been overlooked by scholars of mural painting in Britain as a primary instigator of the revival of that genre.<sup>40</sup> As William Pressly pointed out, this series has no precedent in British painting with regards to the terms of its conception and execution; Barry negotiated a deal with the Royal Society of Arts - the terms of which were that he would execute six paintings at no other cost to the society than the supply of his materials - which allowed him an unparalleled degree of creative freedom. It was Barry, therefore, who decided to create such vast paintings, which were far removed from the society's plan to commission "discrete pictures."<sup>41</sup> In the introduction to his *Account of a series of Paintings in the Great Room* (1783), Barry framed his conception of his work

<sup>39</sup> John Evelyn, *The Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. Guy De la Bédoyère (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1955) pp. 385-386. Only fragments of this work (oil on panel) survive. For Fuller (1606/1620?-1672), who produced the earliest known British drawing manual (entitled *Un Libro da designiare*), see de Piles, trans. Savage, 1706, p. 420 and Waterhouse, 1953, pp. 89-90.

<sup>40</sup> See Susan Bennett, ed., *Cultivating the Human Faculties: James Barry and the Society of Arts* (Bethlehem: Lehigh University Press, 2008) and Pressly, 1981, for a thorough investigation into the Adelphi commission, its execution and reception. Pressly's most-utilised descriptor in this account for the paintings is 'mural'; however, Clare Willsdon's bias in both her excellent survey of mural painting and her entry on that subject in the Grove Dictionary of Art is for the nineteenth century. See Clare A. P. Willsdon, et al. 'Mural.' Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online. Oxford University Press, accessed March 04 2013, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T060429> and Clare A. P. Willsdon, *Mural Painting in Britain 1840-1940* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000).

<sup>41</sup> William Pressly, *James Barry: the artist as hero*, exh. cat. (London: Tate Gallery, 1983) p. 79.

in relation to Raphael's Stanza della Signatura at the Vatican, inviting a lengthy comparison between his canvases and presumably also implying the terms on which he hoped that they would be received. One such response to *Elysium* does accord with Barry's hopes in formulating a connection between this canvas and Raphael's frescoes, thereby simultaneously aggrandising Barry's paintings and reinforcing the superiority of fresco. The critic picked out the archangel holding the scales in the painting and wrote that it was "in the true Sublime of the Art far above all other modern Efforts, and almost equal of M. Angelo, or the Fresco Works of Raffaello."<sup>42</sup> In addition to their size and interior location, Barry's paintings deployed a similar hermeneutic strategy to that present in the frescoes of his model, harnessing an ostensibly Classical narrative to overlay a Catholic one.<sup>43</sup>

Barry is particularly relevant to any discussion of Blake's art because of the central role played by the former artist in the latter's artistic thought and, as has been recently recognised, self-fashioning.<sup>44</sup> Blake's published (Chaucer's *Canterbury Pilgrims*) and unpublished (his annotations to Reynolds's *Discourses*) writings endorse Barry in the highest terms, as an "Historical & Poetical Artist" who executed pictures "equal to Rafael or Mich Ang or any of the Italians."<sup>45</sup> It is notable that these phrases are almost exact recapitulations of earlier literature - again both public and private - in which Blake described his own art.<sup>46</sup> There are multiple points of contact between Blake and Barry, encompassing such examples as their circle of friends, their views on art and their involvement with the Royal Academy, but of interest in this context in addition to Barry's fresco-like mural paintings are his views on fresco as expressed in his Royal Academy lectures in the 1780s and 1790s, which Blake cannot have been ignorant of.<sup>47</sup> Barry's sixth lecture as Professor of Painting,

<sup>42</sup>Quoted in Pressly, 1983, p. 78.

<sup>43</sup>An excellent recent chapter by Pressly on the murals explores the tension between Barry's "public" and "private" art and their co-existence in the *The Progress of Human Culture*. See William Pressly, 'Crowning the Victors at Olympia: The Great Rooms Primary Focus', in Tom Dunne and William Pressly, eds., *James Barry, 1741-1806: History Painter* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010) pp. 189-210.

<sup>44</sup>The insightful article by Susan Matthews cited above as part of the volume of *Tate Papers* focused on Blake's 1809 exhibition construes that event as being fundamentally influenced by Barry's example, pointing out that Blake's references to his elder colleague are clustered, temporally, around the date of his own exhibition. Matthews, 2010.

<sup>45</sup>Erdman, 1988, pp. 581 and 641 respectively.

<sup>46</sup>As previously referenced, Blake designated the paintings in his 1809 exhibition "Poetical and Historical Inventions". Moreover, in a letter to his patron Thomas Butts dating from 1802 he made the claim that "the works I have done for [Butts] are Equal to Carrache or Rafael (and I am now Seven years older than Rafael was when he died)". Geoffrey Keynes, ed., *The Letters of William Blake* (New York: Macmillan, 1956) p. 73.

<sup>47</sup>Although it is widely known that Blake never achieved - and seems never to have been put up for - election to the academy and it is oft-assumed that he only enrolled as a pupil for a very short period, Aileen Ward argues persuasively that Blake's high exhibition record at the academy in the early 1780s and later connections with the institution belied an enduring relationship with it. Aileen Ward, "'S' Joshua and His Gang": William Blake and the Royal Academy', *Huntington*

delivered in 1793, obviated to a significant degree the lack of technical instruction apparent in Reynolds's discourses.<sup>48</sup> The subject was colour, and Barry analysed the practice of colouring, offering his opinions as to the various positive qualities that could be attained and how to handle pigments and vehicles, identifying advantages and deficiencies. Thus whilst Barry ranked "the best coloured pictures of the Roman school" as those "painted in fresco", he also explicitly cautioned unqualified practitioners against embarking upon experimenting with the medium, which he stated was more difficult than tempera and oil.<sup>49</sup> Barry told his audience that executing a "great work in fresco" was predicated on a multitude of factors and not least "great intelligence and ability."<sup>50</sup> He concluded his discussion of fresco painting by using it as an impetus to motivation. Whilst reiterating the widely-held belief that fresco was not congenial to the British climate ("painting in fresco is never likely to be much in use amongst us"), Barry nevertheless posited it as an inducement, suggesting that students should reflect on how much more they could attain through utilising the technically-easier medium of oil to continually retouch and improve their paintings.<sup>51</sup>

Henry Fuseli, another significant artistic acquaintance of Blake's, also treated fresco in his academy lectures as Professor of Painting immediately following Barry's tenure. In the publication of his lectures the contents page intimates that an entire lecture was devoted to the subject of colour in fresco painting followed by a complementary one entitled 'Colour.-Oil Painting', but in fact in that on fresco the term in question only makes an appearance two-thirds of the way into the text, that prior being devoted to a general discussion of colour. The evocative language used by Fuseli in his lectures has been previously noted, and his description of fresco as a "simple, broad, pure, fresh and limpid vehicle" perpetuates that literary tendency.<sup>52</sup> Following the academic line established by Reynolds and continued by Barry, Fuseli also emphasised fresco's pre-eminent consonance with the highest genre of art, designating it the "sovereign instrument" of "poetic painting" and the "aptest vehicle

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*Library Quarterly*, 52 (1989) pp. 75-95.

<sup>48</sup> Barry's lectures were also about double the length of those of Reynolds but by no means prolix, unlike his exceedingly long public description of the Adelphi paintings. Although it was claimed that Barry's lectures contributed to his ultimate downfall in his expulsion from the Royal Academy, Joseph Farington related that they were very well-received by the institution's students. See Chapter 3 of this thesis for more on Barry's fractious relationship with the academy.

<sup>49</sup> Edward Fryer, ed., *The Works of James Barry*, vol. I (London: 1809) pp. 538-541.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 539.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 541.

<sup>52</sup> A technical mistake corrected by Ralph Wornum in his edition of the lectures of Barry, Fuseli and Opie: "Fresco is an Italian term signifying simply *sul fresco intonaco*, on the *fresh coat*, or *on the wet* plaster: its vehicle is water." Ralph Wornum, ed., *Lectures on Painting by the Royal Academicians* (London, 1864) p. 510 (fn.).

of a great design” due to its fundamental purity and breadth of tint.<sup>53</sup> In the analysis of examples of painting that follows, Fuseli privileged fresco as a medium over oil in his comparisons of the works of artists including Michelangelo, Correggio and even Titian, and concluded that “the ultimate powers” of both Raphael and fresco were “collected in the astonishing picture of the Heliodorus.”<sup>54</sup> Fuseli also made explicit the orthodox academic belief regarding that hierarchy of technique by referencing the following apocryphal denouncement of fresco attributed to Michelangelo by Vasari: “[Michelangelo] was displeased when the Vatican proposed that he paint the *Last Judgement* in oils, for he considered this mode of painting nothing but women’s work, prizing fresco as an artful and manly occupation.”<sup>55</sup> The implications of this gendered view of fresco shall be explored later in this chapter.

This, then, is a flavour of the intellectual and theoretical context of fresco in the last decades of the eighteenth century, which Blake would have been exposed to either by attendance at Royal Academy lectures or through his acquaintance with artists including both Fuseli and Barry.<sup>56</sup> As has been recently recognised, artistic networks played a driving role in the dissemination of knowledge regarding painting techniques and methods in the early decades of the Royal Academy. Additionally, however, Blake would also have accessed literary accounts of fresco. Autodidacticism played a significant role in Blake’s development of his ‘fresco’ technique and, as Blake himself intimated, Frederick Tatham testified and the researches of Geoffrey Keynes have partially recovered, the artist was a voracious reader of a variety of material.<sup>57</sup> As a student of the Royal Academy he would have had access to the institution’s library, and it is known that he owned at least two works of art history/theory – famously, the second edition of *The Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds* (1798) and also Fuseli’s translation of Winckelmann’s *Reflections on the Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks* (1765).<sup>58</sup> Additionally, Samuel Palmer’s comment about Blake’s affinity with Fra Angelico would strongly suggest that Blake was familiar with Vasari’s *Lives*, presumably in one of the many abridged English translations that appeared during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; also, of course, Blake’s unassailable belief that the Venetians “could not Draw” has its ultimate precedent in Vasari’s

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<sup>53</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 510-511.

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 514. A subject of one of the Stanza della Segnatura frescoes.

<sup>55</sup>Wornum refutes this suggestion vehemently in a footnote to one of Fuseli’s earlier lectures, arguing that Michelangelo’s appreciation of the advantages of oil paint were evidenced by his lavish praise of Titian. *Ibid.*, p. 384.

<sup>56</sup>John Opie, Professor of Painting from 1805 until his death in 1807 and whose lectures were published alongside those of Barry and Fuseli, did not engage in any sustained discussion of fresco as a medium or any specific techniques associated with it. His usage of the term ‘fresco’ is merely descriptive.

<sup>57</sup>See Chapter XXI, ‘Blake’s Library’, in Geoffrey Keynes, *Blake Studies*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971) pp. 155-162.

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 159-161.



attacks about the Venetians' lack of skill in *disegno*.<sup>59</sup> Of more specific interest, perhaps, is a passage in Blake's great friend and supporter George Cumberland's treatise *Thoughts on Outline* (1796), about which Blake and Cumberland corresponded and for which Blake engraved eight plates.<sup>60</sup> Cumberland describes having read a manuscript copy of Cennino Cennini's *Il libro dell'arte* (written c. 1390) in the collection of the Duke of Florence during his travels in Italy, noting that:

The *Andrea Cennini*, whose, manuscript is very valuable, on account of the exact directions which it gives for the painting in fresco of those times, says, among other things, that "*Giotto* translated the art of painting from the Greeks to the Latins, and taught it to his godson *Taddeo*, who was his disciple twenty-four years, who taught it to his son *Agnolo Taddeo*, to whom *Andrea Cennini* was twelve years a scholar." - Thus we see these fresco painters were not speedily formed.<sup>61</sup>

It is difficult to believe that Cumberland would not have shared at least a resume of these 'directions' with his artist friend.<sup>62</sup> Another potential source available to Blake was the widely-read Revd. Matthew Pilkington's *Dictionary of Painters*, which contained accounts of both distemper and fresco.<sup>63</sup>

## Blake's technical knowledge of fresco.

In addition to the theoretical discussions of the medium and techniques of fresco outlined above, Blake's decision to experiment with the medium he would christen 'fresco' can be further located firmly within his wider cultural environment. Acceptance of this state of affairs necessarily leads to a revised account of Blake's understanding of 'Italian' painting techniques. Many scholars have asserted that Blake's usage of the term 'fresco' was born of ignorance, "based upon the mistaken assumption that the medium of early Italian panel painting was the same as that

<sup>59</sup>Erdman, 1998, p. 646.

<sup>60</sup>For George Cumberland, see Geoffrey Keynes, 'Some Uncollected Authors XLIV: George Cumberland (1754-1848)', *The Book Collector*, 19 (1970) pp. 31-65.

<sup>61</sup>George Cumberland, *Thoughts on Outline* (London, 1796) p. 27. Cumberland mistakenly designates Andrea Cennini, Cennino's father, the author of the work. This appears to be an early example of an English artist-connoisseur coming into contact with this work, which existed only in three manuscript copies (none of which the original) until Giuseppe Tambroni rediscovered one, located in Rome and thought to have been made in the eighteenth century and less than reliable, and published it in 1821. See Erling Skaug, 'Cenniniana: Notes on Cennino Cennini and his Treatise', *Arte Cristiana*, 81 (1993) pp. 15-22 and Roger Tarr, 'Cennino Cennini', in Chris Murray, ed., *Key Writers on Art: From Antiquity to the Nineteenth Century* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003) pp. 38-44.

<sup>62</sup>Joan Stemmler was the first to explicate the exposure of Blake to this "primary source for Trecento painting material and techniques." Joan Stemmler, 'Cennino, Cumberland, Blake and Early Painting Techniques', *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly*, 17 (1984) pp. 45-49.

<sup>63</sup>Matthew Pilkington, *Dictionary of Painters* (London, 1770) pp. xvii-xviii.

used for fresco upon walls, a confusion which would have been inconceivable to an artist who had travelled in Italy”, for example.<sup>64</sup> Similarly, it has been stated that “fresco was Blake’s term for the technique he invented which is normally now referred to as tempera. Both terms were misunderstood by Blake through lack of knowledge of Italian art”.<sup>65</sup> Conversely, Blake’s knowledge of ‘fresco’ was much more secure than he has previously been given credit for, informed by the artistic community in which he operated, if not by his visiting Italy himself.

William Blake, like William Hogarth before him, famously never travelled to Italy, that Pantheon of the visual arts, although an early letter from John Flaxman suggests that a scheme was afoot to send him there in the 1780s. To reiterate the point, Blake’s lack of first-hand experience of Italian art has led to a multitude of scholars suggesting either implicitly or explicitly that this was the cause of his ‘mistake’ in his usage of the term fresco. However, many of Blake’s closest friends and associates - artists and amateur artists - spent a great deal of time in that country and recognition of them as conduits for Blake’s knowledge of art has been hitherto under-appreciated. This is especially true if we accept the centrally-oriented Blake first sketched out by Anthony Blunt and authorised by later scholars - a Blake who operated within a fluid, trans-creative environment of sharing, borrowing and modifying artistic ideas and motifs. First to visit Italy amongst Blake’s acquaintances were Ozias Humphrey and George Romney, who made their pilgrimage together in the 1770s; both men met Thomas Patch in Florence, and a sketch by Romney annotated “Cimabue” suggests his having studied frescoes in that city and possibly under Patch’s influence.<sup>66</sup> Then George Cumberland went to Italy between 1785 and 1786, staying in Florence and Rome and bringing back with him multiple drawings of ancient and Renaissance sculptures, vases, paintings and frescoes.<sup>67</sup> Finally, as previously mentioned, John Flaxman travelled and lived in the country between 1787 and 1794. Flaxman studied a plethora of art, but his unusual focus on thirteenth- and fourteenth-century painting and sculpture has been noted; amongst many other things, he made multiple sketches from the Campo Santo fresco cycles in Pisa and Cavallini’s mosaics in Sta Maria Trastevere, Rome.<sup>68</sup> Although there is no definitive evidence that such an event took place, it is not far-fetched to conjecture that Blake would have relished the opportunity to see the sketches made by

<sup>64</sup>Bindman, 1977, p. 155.

<sup>65</sup>Simon Wilson, *Tate Gallery: An Illustrated Companion*, rev. ed. (Tate Gallery, London, 1991) p. 68. A later publication of the Tate Gallery does espouse a revised view of that given in Simon Wilson’s guide, briefly sketching out many of the connections Blake would have had to examples of fresco and tempera painting that shall be elucidated in the following section of this chapter. See Robin Hamlyn, ‘Prologue’, in Hamlyn and Townsend, 2003, pp. 15-16

<sup>66</sup>See Chapter 6 for a discussion of the connection between Patch and Romney.

<sup>67</sup>George Cumberland, *Outlines from the Antients* (London, 1829) pp. i-xxiv.

<sup>68</sup>See Brigstocke, Marchand and Wright, eds., 2010.

Flaxman of Italian art in the mid 1790s, and as Bindman surmised, Flaxman and George Romney were probably significant figures in transmitting to Blake a degree of knowledge concerning the stylistic and spiritual features of early Italian art. This hypothesis is borne out by a comparison of Flaxman's sketches of such art with Blake's visual works: correspondences can be identified between three of Flaxman's sketches and three separate works by Blake for Thomas Butts.<sup>69</sup> Flaxman's study of early Italian art also tangibly influenced his own sculpture, which Blake would have been aware of.<sup>70</sup>

Alongside this second-hand information from his artistic contemporaries, it is highly likely that Blake may have had the opportunity to examine specimens of fresco painting himself. Thomas Patch, as detailed in Chapter 6 of this thesis, was the point of sale for a number of fresco fragments (believed to be by Giotto) from the fire-damaged Manetti Chapel of Santa Maria della Carmine, Florence to the collector Charles Townley in 1772 (Fig. 141).<sup>71</sup> Gerard Vaughan, in an essay of 2002 exploring Townley's medievalism, claimed that Townley was thus the "first English collector to bring a Trecento Florentine painting into Britain," and that the presence of the fragments were indicative of a wider interest in mediaevalism on the part of Townley, long obscured by his reputation as an arbiter of classical taste.<sup>72</sup> As a marker of the taste for early Italian art, that Townley is identified as the connoisseur responsible for bringing the fragments to England in subsequent sale catalogues recording their fate further emphasises the unusual nature of his action. It would be extremely interesting to know how and where the fragments were displayed. Vaughan pointed out that Townley owned two major properties: the house in London which housed his gallery of ancient marbles, which was freely open to the public, and his medieval ancestral home, Townley Hall in Lancashire, at which

<sup>69</sup>1. Flaxman: Creation of Eve, after Andrea Pisano (Fig. 135). Inscribed: (above) 'a basrelief'; (below) 'Creation of Eve after the design of Giotto in the Bell Tower of St Maria del Fiore Florence. Andrea Pisano.' Yale Sketchbook f. 6r. (Eckart Marchand, 'Flaxman: Yale Sketchbook', in Brigstocke, Marchand and Wright, eds., 2010, p. 122) and Blake: *The Creation of Eve*: 'And she shall be called Woman' (Fig. 136), c. 1803-5 (part of the Butts Bible watercolour series, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art). Blake's composition inverts an element of Pisano's in his God grasping the arm of Adam in order to lift him up and introduce him to Eve. 2. Flaxman: The Transfiguration, after Ghiberti (Fig. 137). Inscribed in ink on verso: 'The Transfiguration from the same Gate / Ghiberti'. Yale Sketchbook f. 18r (*Ibid.*, p. 127) and Blake: *The Transfiguration* (Fig. 138), c. 1800 (Butts watercolour, now in the Victoria & Albert Museum). 3. Flaxman: Eve Cain and Abel, after Vittorio Ghiberti (Fig. 139). V&A sketchbook (Eckart Marchand, 'V&A sketchbook E 442-1937', 2010, p. 281) and Blake: *Eve Tempted by the Serpent* (Fig. 140), c. 1799-1800 (Butts tempera, V&A). Both Eves share a contrapposto attitude and an upraised right arm, and both figures interact with curvilinear shapes.

<sup>70</sup>See Tritz and Kessler, 2009, pp. 32-33, which argues for the influence of a figure from Masaccio's *Trinity* fresco in Sta. Maria Novella, Florence, on one of Flaxman's major funerary monuments.

<sup>71</sup>The subsequent history of these four fragments is given in the aforementioned chapter.

<sup>72</sup>Vaughan, in Muir, ed., 2002, p. 311.

a number of medieval works were displayed, including illuminated manuscripts.<sup>73</sup> Certainly, the nature of the Townley collection as a whole - which primarily encompassed fragments of classical marbles, including reliefs, collected with the intention of illustrating the history of antiquities intimates that they would have comfortably blended in.<sup>74</sup> All of this is of interest because it is highly likely that Blake knew the Townley collection at the critical juncture of 1799, as in that year he engraved a bust of Pericles owned by Townley (at the recommendation of Flaxman) for the frontispiece to William Hayley's *Essay on Sculpture* (published in 1800). Whether he did this from an intermediary drawing made by another artist (as was the case with his engraving of a medallion by Flaxman of Hayley's illegitimate son, also published in the *Essay on Sculpture*) or first-hand is unknown, but Townley's collection was freely open upon application from the 1780s and one cannot imagine Blake having missed the opportunity to see it. Thus, if the fresco fragments were displayed or housed in London at any point prior to 1801, when one is documented as having been shown at a meeting at the Society of Antiquaries, or after 1803, Blake may well have had the opportunity to examine them.<sup>75</sup> That at least one of the fresco fragments was in London in 1801 is attested to through a series of letters between Townley and the Society of Antiquaries, who accepted Townley's loan of a fragment for display at one of their meetings. Additionally, samples of fresco painting - predominantly dating from after the Cinquecento, in accordance with prevailing taste, or, alternatively, designated as 'anonymous' - sporadically appeared on the auction market around the turn of the nineteenth century, such as at the Christie's sale of Joshua Reynolds collection in March 1795 which included lot 104: 'A Boy's Head, in fresco - study for the Farnese Gallery in Rome' attributed to Carracci.<sup>76</sup>

There was, moreover, another forum through which Blake would undoubtedly have been exposed to actual specimens of fresco painting. The Royal Academy exhibitions of 1797 and 1798 contained, respectively, three 'specimens' of fresco painting and one 'study' in fresco submitted by the Royal Academician John Francis Rigaud (1742-1810), primarily valued now for his visual contribution to our understanding of academy politics in his two group portraits of leading figures in that institution.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>73</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup>See Brian F. Cook, *The Townley Marbles* (London: British Museum Press, 1985) and Vicky Coltman, *Classical Sculpture and the Culture of Collecting in Britain since 1760* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

<sup>75</sup>Between September 1800 and September 1803 Blake and his wife were resident at William Hayley's house in Felpham on the Sussex coast, and Blake is not known to have visited London during this period.

<sup>76</sup>Bought by Clark for 17.6

<sup>77</sup>Rigaud's fresco exhibitions were as follows: at the twenty-ninth exhibition of the Royal Academy in 1797 he exhibited (no. 468) 'Hope, a specimen of Fresco painting on Portland Stone'; (no. 484) 'Innocence, a specimen of fresco painting on Portland Stone'; and (no. 773) 'Cupid, a specimen of fresco painting on Portland Stone', and at the thirtieth exhibition of the Royal Academy in 1798,

The former of these exhibits were possibly related to the allegorical emblems commissioned by John Boydell to decorate the cupola of the common council room in the London Guildhall (Figs. 142, 143 and 144), and the latter was “a study for a large fresco painting of Christ’s Ascension” which, according to a historical account of the church, “had grown into a deformity in consequence of damp” and therefore been destroyed by the publication of the account in 1828.<sup>78</sup> So too were the Guildhall frescoes ordered destroyed by 1814, only two years after Rigaud’s death and just twenty years after their execution, which lends a heavy air of pathos to Rigaud’s private note for October 4th 1794 that he had just “[f]inished the greatest work [he had] ever done ... by all accounts ... the first work painted in fresco in London.”<sup>79</sup> Although Rigaud entertained doubts about mistakes he may have made to contribute to the immediately-deteriorating condition of his Guildhall frescoes, he and Boydell eventually became convinced that the fault lay with the errant city plasterer who, they believed, had mixed coal ash in the rough plastering beneath the smooth top layer.<sup>80</sup> Although the memoir relates that Rigaud made adjustments to his method and technique for the execution of his next fresco, the monumental (21ft by 12ft) *Ascension* for the altar of St Martin’s Outwich, this too succumbed to damp. Rigaud, however, retained the belief that fresco was a workable medium in Britain, writing: “The result of my experience shows that the climate is not contrary to Fresco painting, but that the whole success depends on the materials used, and upon those employed upon the wall in the under work.”<sup>81</sup>

This confidence as to the possibilities of fresco was undoubtedly in part predicated on Rigaud’s other foray into fresco painting. John William Brown, the author of an early memoir of Rigaud appended to a publication (dated 1835) of the latter’s translation of Leonardo da Vinci’s *A Treatise on Painting*, claimed that the distinction of executing the first fresco in England could be given to the artist, writing that he painted “for his Lordship [the Earl of Aylesford] an Altar-piece, in Fresco, for the Parish Church at Packington, his Lordship’s Seat in Warwickshire; which is supposed to be the first Painting in Fresco executed in this country.”<sup>82</sup>

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Rigaud exhibited (no. 415) ‘A study in Fresco of the Ascension; executed at St Martin’s, Outwich’. For Rigaud see William Pressley, ‘John Francis Rigaud’, *Walpole Society Journal*, 50 (1984) pp. 1-164, and for an analysis of the group portraits see Shearer West, ‘Xenophobia and Xenomania: Italians and the English Royal Academy’ in Shearer West, ed., *Italian Culture in Northern Europe in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) pp. 116-139.

<sup>78</sup>Thomas Allen, *The History and Antiquities of London, Westminster, Southwark and parts adjacent*, vol. III (London, 1828) p. 206. See note 19 for an earlier mention of Boydell’s commissioning of the Guildhall frescoes. These are now destroyed and thus it is impossible to evaluate the veracity of Rigaud’s claim to medium. See Edward Croft-Murray, *Decorative Painting in England 1537-1837*, vol. II (London: Country Life, 1970) p. 269.

<sup>79</sup>Pressley, 1984, p. 94.

<sup>80</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 99.

<sup>82</sup>This altarpiece is unnamed by Brown, but is recorded by both Nikolaus Pevsner - “The painting

Brown strategically prefaced this claim with an emphasis on Rigaud's authority in the medium gained through first-hand study of fresco, with contemporary fresco practitioners, in Italy.<sup>83</sup> As intimated above, this first fresco painting in Britain, entitled *A Glory of Angels worshipping the Name of Jesus* and executed in early 1791, is the only one of Rigaud's known works in that medium to have survived. Rigaud's own authorial voice, transcribed by his son from notebooks for inclusion in a never-realised memoir, informs us as to his technique:

I followed in the executing of it, the method prescribed by Pozzo, and it succeeded beyond my expectations, as well as those entertained by his Lordship. There is great harmony in the whole, and as much force as a glory will admit. If I apprehend any thing of my execution it is, for having worked rather too long upon some parts of it, with too thin colours, throwing water over it to keep it moist, and thereby, may be, raising up on the sand too much amongst the colours. The other apprehension I entertain is on account of the Naples yellow which I have used in all the light tints of the Glory; as well as on account of the lime, which was not very old, nor very well slacked: even the marble lime, which I had made in London, was very new. This picture, though but about eight by six, is full of work, comprehending thirty two heads, some cherubs, others Angels, or boys. I was six weeks engaged upon this work; I went on very regularly, and it gave general satisfaction.<sup>84</sup>

Rigaud's son, Stephen, assisted him during the painting of this fresco and thus further elucidated his father's description of his method - including Rigaud's use of a cartoon, and the process of laying-on plaster - on this authority. His justification for doing so was his belief that such information was of interest "more especially as this kind of painting is but little known or practised in this country".<sup>85</sup> Although Stephen's life of his father was never published, one catalyst for its genesis may have been the wide-spread interest in fresco in the 1840s and 1850s - the period during which Stephen was preparing his manuscript - engendered by the discussions surrounding the decoration of the Houses of Parliament.<sup>86</sup> Andrea Pozzo's *Prospettiva*

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of the IHS sign in clouds, worshipped by angels" (Nikolaus Pevsner and Alexandra Wedgewood, *The Buildings of England: Warwickshire* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966) p. 298) - and Edward Croft-Murray, who in 1970 tentatively described the *Angels and Cherubs adoring the Sacred Monogram* as "wax encaustic(?) on plaster". Croft-Murray, 1970, pp. 268-269.

<sup>83</sup>An account of the Gilmore collection also notes that Rigaud was the previous owner of one of its artworks - a fresco, by Raphael no less, depicting one of the heads from the cartoon of Ananias. William Dunlap, *History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design in the United States*, vol. II (New York, 1834) p. 461.

<sup>84</sup>Pressly, 1984, p. 84.

<sup>85</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>86</sup>See Chapter 9 for a detailed discussion of the context of the use of fresco in the Houses of Parliament.

*de' pittori e architetti*, published in 1700, was, according to Stephen, “promulgated as the true [method]” of fresco painting, but in fact set out a programme of instruction for painters which accorded to *mezzo fresco* or *fresco secco*, and thus close to what Blake later tried to create on canvas.<sup>87</sup>

Alongside Rigaud’s ‘fresco’ exhibits and the Townley ‘Giotto’s’, visual examples of tempera painting were also accessible to Blake, as Robin Hamlyn pointed out, through his early engraving work at Westminster Abbey. The Abbey housed the Westminster Retable and the scenes from the Book of Job in St Stephen’s Chapel, and the latter were also popularised through engravings after them published by the Society of Antiquaries in 1795.<sup>88</sup> Thus we can safely conjecture that Blake would have had a relatively informed knowledge of both the technical process of fresco painting relative to other media and of its historical use and effect.

## Blake’s usage of the term and medium ‘fresco’.

So far this chapter has elucidated the wideness of the scope of information regarding fresco painting available to a British artist in the last decades of the eighteenth century. That fresco was generally considered an unsuitable medium for the British climate did not by any means preclude interest in it and the techniques associated with it.<sup>89</sup> Thus, the received opinion that Blake’s misuse of the term ‘fresco’ was unintentional, and probably a product of ignorance due to his failure to visit Italy, must be incorrect. In fact, as has been pointed out by Bronwyn Ormsby:

Blake constructed his own definition of the ‘fresco’ technique by saying that it merely required the presence of a ‘plaster ground and the absence of an oily vehicle.’ He also considered that ‘the peculiarity from which it takes its name - that of being executed on a wet surface - as a comparatively trivial one’, and thus, by his own definition, he was, of course, painting in fresco.<sup>90</sup>

Ormsby was here relying on evidence given in Gilchrist that is impossible to corroborate, as the above comments were attributed by him to merely ‘another friend’.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>87</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>88</sup>Hamlyn, 2003, p. 16.

<sup>89</sup>Croft-Murray (1970, pp. 309-311) gives a concise summary of the eighteenth-century interest in fresco amongst British artists and connoisseurs, which he ascribes to the influence of travel to Italy and the importation into Britain of Italian decorative painters, and the abortive attempts to adapt it to the British climate. Croft-Murray’s catalogue demonstrates the dominance and popularity of oil as a medium for painting on walls and ceilings.

<sup>90</sup>Bronwyn Ormsby, ‘The Painting of the Temperas’, in Hamlyn and Townsend, 2003, p. 111.

<sup>91</sup>Gilchrist, 1863, p. 369.

However, regardless of whether or not Blake did truly redefine the accepted medium of fresco painting in the terms given by Gilchrist, he certainly applied the word to artworks that he would have known were, in a literal sense, in a different medium. Acceptance of Blake's understanding of the method of fresco painting necessarily leads to the assumption that his use of the word therefore had some form of ideological meaning, and the primary reason that Blake did so was, surely, to lay claim to the status accorded fresco, and to place himself within that specific artistic tradition.

Blake's usage of the term 'fresco', in addition to his methodology, can also be related to his personal artistic trajectory. His 'recovery' of fresco can be conceptualised as a natural development from his engagement with medieval craft techniques (which he fused with his innovative relief-etching process) in the production of his series of illuminated books (Fig. 145).<sup>92</sup> The illuminated books have unarguably attracted the greatest amount of attention in the Blakean critical heritage, and in this context, Blake's designating his books as illuminated is significant.<sup>93</sup> Illumination in the Middle Ages, being a temporally and financially costly process, was reserved for high-status texts, which were almost always scriptural; Blake, therefore, can be understood as making a claim for both the status and authority of his books, and indeed the titles of two of them included the suffix 'a prophecy'.<sup>94</sup> There is an argument to be made, moreover, that Blake may have been attempting to recover and democratise the medium of the illuminated book, indicated by the extremely low prices he set for those in the prospectus of 1793.<sup>95</sup> If this were his intention, despite his printing the illuminated books in editions the cost and time involved necessarily

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<sup>92</sup>Stuart Edgar made the useful suggestion that one way of understanding an aspect of Blake's intention regarding the creation of the illuminated books is in light of Jay Boulter's concept of remediation - "a newer medium tak[ing] the place of an older one, borrowing and reorganizing the characteristics of writing in the older medium and reforming its cultural space ... remediation involves both homage and rivalry, for the new medium imitates some features of the older medium, but also makes an implicit or explicit claim to improve on the older one" (Jay D. Boulter, *Writing Space: Computers, Text and the Remediation of Print*, 2nd ed. (New Jersey and London: Erlbaum, 2001) p. 23). Edgar also argues that Blake remediated two different mediums: medieval manuscripts and the printed book. See [www.blogs.ubc.ca/etec540sept09/2009/10/28/william-blake-and-the-remediation-of-print](http://www.blogs.ubc.ca/etec540sept09/2009/10/28/william-blake-and-the-remediation-of-print). Anthony Blunt helpfully listed the medieval manuscripts that Blake potentially knew: Blunt, 1943, pp. 198-200.

<sup>93</sup>Blake did so in his prospectus entitled 'To the Public', dated October 10th 1793. This document is lost, and known through its transcription by Gilchrist. Numbers 3 to 8 advertise *America, a Prophecy*, *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*, *The Book of Thel*, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience* respectively, with those titles being followed by the phrase 'illuminated printing'. Following the catalogue of items for sale, Blake wrote: "The Illuminated Books are Printed in Colours and on the most beautiful wove paper that could be procured." Erdman, 1988, pp. 692-693.

<sup>94</sup>*America, a Prophecy* (1793) and *Europe, a Prophecy* (1794).

<sup>95</sup>Joseph Viscomi gives a thorough account of the practical considerations surrounding the production of the illuminated books and set out the counterarguments concerning Blake's intended audience and his notion of publishing. Joseph Viscomi, 'William Blake, Illuminated Books, and the Concept of Difference', in Karl Kroeber and Gene Ruoff, eds., *Romantic Poetry: Recent Revisionary Criticism* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1993) pp. 61-87.



restricted their production - there are 168 extant or known copies of Blake's fifteen illuminated books - and therefore they reached only a limited audience.<sup>96</sup> A concern with audience has been read by many scholars into the production of twelve large coloured prints (Fig. 146), which immediately succeeded the first series of the illuminated books (and were possibly concomitant with the production of the last two). The circumstances of their creation are unknown and, more controversially, an agreed definition of their meaning has never been reached, but the majority of scholars concede that they form a series with common themes and a unified message. Moreover, many have suggested that these prints must have been intended for public exhibition, given their size.<sup>97</sup> The large coloured prints also share a number of salient elements with the Butts tempera series in terms of their medium: both sets have gesso-like grounds with the surfaces comprising watercolour, pen and ink. One can trace a material evolution, therefore, from the illuminated books through the large colour prints to the Butts tempera series, and, concomitantly, a conceptual continuum regarding the relationship between medium and intended audience in the same chain of works which reached its zenith in Blake's 'fresco' paintings exhibited at his brother's house in 1809.

But why, from a practical point of view, did Blake choose to experiment with a new medium in the last decade of the eighteenth century, as opposed to executing his commissions in any other medium? Blake's British contemporaries were employing a variety of media in both private and public commissions - gouache, watercolour and chalks, for example. The answer to this question seems to be a confluence of two factors. First, Blake famously disdained oil paint as a medium, losing no opportunity - public or private - to air his views regarding its inadequacy, and his association of medium with morality recalls the tenor of Mary Wollstonecraft's assessment of Edmund Burke's definition on the sublime.<sup>98</sup> However, oil paint was considered the pre-eminent vehicle for history painting, and, moreover, privileged in the annual Royal Academy exhibitions. Thus for an artist concerned with both the integrity and status of his artwork for its own sake and also for the sake of its bearing on his personal reputation, watercolour was not a viable option - and, as has been previously referenced, Blake did indeed exhibit two of the paintings from the Butts

<sup>96</sup>Bindman and Visconti both particularly stressed this fact.

<sup>97</sup>See, for example, Bindman, 1979, p. 98 and Robin Hamlyn and Michael Phillips, *William Blake*, exh. cat. (London: Tate Publishing, 2000) p. 194. David W. Lindsay, 'The Order of Blake's Large Colour Prints', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 52 (1989) pp. 19-41 gives a useful resume of the major scholarship on the prints up until that point, with a focus on interpretation of authorial intention regarding ordering and meaning.

<sup>98</sup>Wollstonecraft opened *Rights of Men* with the statement: "For truth, in morals, has ever appeared to me the essence of the sublime and, in taste, simplicity the only criterion of the beautiful."

tempera series in the Royal Academy exhibitions of 1799 and 1800.<sup>99</sup> However, another catalyst may have been the discussions surrounding fresco painting described above which seem to have played a prominent role in Blake's artistic milieu prior to the turn of the century.

Indeed, in addition to Blake's application of the term to the 1809 exhibition, 'fresco' is most often frequently used by scholars of Blake in discussions of a series of paintings (Figs. 147, 148, 149 and 150) he executed at the turn of the nineteenth century for the civil servant Thomas Butts, a long-term friend and significant patron, notwithstanding the fact that Blake himself neither included the word 'fresco' alongside his signature on these paintings nor referred to this series as such.<sup>100</sup> That the medium of what is frequently termed the 'Butts tempera series' is the same as that used by Blake in those works he designated 'fresco' in 1809 has been sufficient for scholars to bracket them together conceptually. The issue of when Blake may have first used the term 'fresco' is an opaque one. An anecdote related by Gilchrist seemingly suggests that it pre-dated the execution of both the large coloured prints in 1795 and the Butts biblical paintings a few years later, making reference to an alleged conversation between Blake and Joshua Reynolds (who died in 1792). Whether or not this uncorroborated "interview" of which "Blake used to tell" can be trusted, however, is another matter.<sup>101</sup> Martin Butlin, in an analysis of Blake's changing signature over time, argues that Blake probably inscribed the word 'fresco' on five of the large colour prints after 1806, thereby implicitly linking his usage of the term to the 1809 exhibition.<sup>102</sup> Certainly the term was not used by the artist on either occasion of his exhibiting works from the series at the Royal Academy.<sup>103</sup>

<sup>99</sup>See, for the context of the watercolour debate, Greg Smith, 'Watercolourists and Watercolours at the Royal Academy, 1780-1836', in David Solkin, ed., *Art on the Line*, exh. cat. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001) pp. 189-200.

<sup>100</sup>As no letters to or from Butts survive before September 1800, it is impossible to draw conclusions as to how Blake himself conceptualised the medium of this series. In his letters to Butts dating 1800-1803 he used the generic terms 'pictures' or 'designs', but these reference the series of watercolours (comprising approximately 80 in total) he produced for him immediately following the temperas.

<sup>101</sup>"Blake used to tell of an interview he had once had with Reynolds, in which our neglected enthusiast found the originator of a sect in art to which his own was so hostile, very pleasant personally, as most found him. 'Well, Mr. Blake,' blandly remarked the President, who, doubtless, had heard strange accounts of his interlocutor's sayings and doings, 'I hear you despise our art of oil-painting.' 'No, Sir Joshua, I don't despise it; but I like fresco better.' " Gilchrist, vol. I, 1863, p. 96.

<sup>102</sup>Martin Butlin, 'Cataloguing William Blake', in Robert Essick and Donald Pearce, eds., *Blake in his Time* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978) pp. 77-90.

<sup>103</sup>Blake exhibited *The Last Supper* in the exhibition of 1799 (when it was one of only twenty-three works of a religious subject matter exhibited out of a total of 1,118) and *The Loaves and Fishes* in 1800. In both cases, there is no mention of medium in the academy exhibition catalogue; only the title of the works and their scriptural source is given.

A letter of 1799 from Blake to George Cumberland is generally agreed to refer to this early Butts commission, and is also used to date its inception:

I am painting Small Pictures from the Bible ... My Work pleases my employer, and I have an order for Fifty small Pictures at One Guinea each, which is Something better than Mere Copying after another artist.<sup>104</sup>

As far as can be ascertained, this series of biblical paintings of c.1799-1803 has never been the focus of a thorough monographic scholarly investigation. Thanks to Martin Butlin's indispensable catalogue of the entirety of Blake's artistic *oeuvre*, though, the basic parameters, character and extent of the series has been determined, largely based on the primary evidence of surviving temperas and the account of Blake's works given by William Rossetti as an appendix to Gilchrist's biography.<sup>105</sup> Thus Butlin catalogued fifty-three temperas as part of the Butts commission in total, thirty of which are known to have survived. The disposition of subjects is believed to have been as follows: seventeen illustrations of Old Testament subjects, four paintings depicting the evangelists and thirty-one illustrations of subjects from the New Testament.<sup>106</sup> Their medium comprises a white priming layer directly applied to the support (canvas, excepting three on copper and one on tinned steel) followed by successive layers of pigments mixed with carpenter's glue. In this sense, Blake's technique accorded with Cennini's definition of tempera. Each layer of colour was, further, succeeded by one of transparent glue or gum to 'fix' the composition.<sup>107</sup> Pen and ink were used to reinforce outline, and gold and silver leaf were also applied to some of the paintings.

In his annotations to Reynolds's fifth discourse (that elucidated earlier in this chapter), Blake vehemently objected to Reynolds's distancing of the term 'Minuteness' - which the latter used pejoratively, it being anathema to his grand style - from great fresco painting, complaining: "This is False. Fresco Painting is the Most minute. Fresco Painting is Like Miniature Painting; a Wall is a Large Ivory."<sup>108</sup> Blake later reiterated this view in the advertisement he printed in advance of his

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<sup>104</sup>Letter from Blake to Cumberland of 26 August 1799. Keynes, 1956, pp. 38-39.

<sup>105</sup>Martin Butlin, *The Paintings and Drawings of William Blake*, 2 vols. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981).

<sup>106</sup>Butlin also identified two potentially related works, a sketch and a tracing (of two separate compositions). Butlin, 1981, nos. The majority (roughly 75%) of those to have survived depict episodes from the life of Christ.

<sup>107</sup>Thomas, 2003, pp. 110-133 offers a thorough analysis of Blake's methods, materials and technique.

<sup>108</sup>Erdman, 1998, p. 653. See Harry Mount, 'Morality, microscopy, and the moderns: The meaning of minuteness in Shaftesbury's theory of painting', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 21 (1998) pp. 125-141 for a discussion of the connotations implicit in the eighteenth-century usage of the term 'minute'.

1809 exhibition, writing that “Fresco Painting is properly Miniature, or Enamel Painting; every thing in Fresco is as high finished as Miniature or Enamel, although in Works larger than Life”.<sup>109</sup> Taking this advertisement - the first document to appear in connection with the exhibition - as a whole, it is clear that Blake entirely redefined the term ‘fresco’ in contradistinction to Reynolds, claiming the status of fresco for “All the little old Pictures, called cabinet Pictures”.<sup>110</sup> This is particularly significant, as by doing so Blake was not just defining the corpus of work on display in the exhibition - many of the frescoes and watercolours that Blake displayed were of dimensions in accordance with Reynolds’s emphasis on large scale, but simultaneously rejected his ‘grand style’ thesis in their phenomenal amount of detail (or ‘minuteness’, such as in the *Canterbury Pilgrims*) - but also thereby rehabilitating his earlier tempera series commissioned by Thomas Butts. In the light of Blake’s general correspondence in the period 1802-1803 and, specifically, the revelatory letter he wrote to William Hayley following his visit to the Truchsessian Gallery in August 1803, Blake’s Felpham period (and the works produced there) has been characterised as one in which the artist had a crisis of inspiration, and it has been suggested that “Blake associated the Butts series with a loss of direction”.<sup>111</sup> There is an inherent tension between the cabinet-picture nature of the tempera series, the majority of those paintings measuring only 10½ x 15 inches,<sup>112</sup> and the normal conventions of religious painting.<sup>113</sup> Prosaically, Blake had not yet attained the requisite level of artistic fame to secure the public patronage for large-scale building decoration that he desired; the renegotiation of fresco painting in this manner may thus have been calculated to allow him to lay claim publicly to the status of ‘modern master’. Both this evaluation of his work and his desire for it to be recognised can be traced back to the period during which Blake was executing the biblical paintings for Butts - writing to offset any complaints his patron may have had regarding his slow rate of execution, Blake claimed that the outcome of his having just devoted two years to the “intense study of those parts of the art which relate to light & shade & colour” was his conviction that the tempera paintings were “Equal in Every part of the Art, & superior in One, to any thing that has been done since the age of Rafael”.<sup>114</sup>

A concern with self-positioning is both implicit and explicit throughout the three pieces of textual propaganda produced by Blake in connection with the 1809

<sup>109</sup>Erdman, 1988, p. 527.

<sup>110</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>111</sup>Richard Dornment, *British Painting in the Philadelphia Museum of Art: From the Seventeenth through the Nineteenth Century*, (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1986) p. 35.

<sup>112</sup>Butlin, 1981, p. 318. Four of the Butts temperas are slightly larger than this at 12¾ x 19 inches.

<sup>113</sup>Bindman, 1979, p. 125.

<sup>114</sup>Letter from Blake to Butts of 22nd November 1802. Keynes, 1956, pp. 72-74.

exhibition - the advertisement of the exhibition, the advertisement of the descriptive catalogue and the descriptive catalogue itself - and Blake's ideology of personal agency pivots around the term 'fresco'. In the advertisement of the exhibition, dated May 15th 1809, Blake stated: "The Art [of fresco painting] has been lost: I have recovered it."<sup>115</sup> He then continued by presaging what now might be termed the modernist strategy of asserting oneself as the instigator of the new by discrediting similar efforts of the past: "Fresco Painting, as it is now practised, is like most other things, the contrary of what it pretends to be."<sup>116</sup> This statement seems fairly strong evidence for the claim made earlier in this chapter that Blake must indeed have been aware of the 'frescoes' executed by Rigaud at the end of the eighteenth century. Moreover, when read in conjunction with the frequent attacks that Blake makes on oil painting throughout the catalogue, it is clear that he was striving to effect a distinct polarity between the two media. In the extended discussion of his second exhibited painting, *The Spiritual Form of Pitt*, Blake made the specious claim that oil was "not used except by blundering ignorance, till after Vandyke's time, but the art of fresco painting being lost, oil became a fetter to genius, and a dungeon to art."<sup>117</sup> One such association that Blake, a self-proclaimed 'genius' of art, may have been hoping to make both literally and metaphorically in the minds of his audience was with the genius of Michelangelo who, as previously referenced, was widely thought to have publicly claimed the superiority of fresco.<sup>118</sup> Ironically, of course, if Blake was indeed using the term 'fresco' explicitly to evoke such an association then he did so falsely, as his technique was not compatible with, and therefore could not lay claim to, the direct manifestation of skill associated with true fresco; Blake's dismissal of the centrality of a wet ground meant that he was able to retouch and correct his paintings at leisure, as opposed to operating within the restrictions of a technique that did not allow for such emendations.

The printed advertisement for Blake's descriptive catalogue, undated but presumably preceding the opening of the exhibition, developed further Blake's definition of his invention and contribution. He claimed that his catalogue would give an account of "the grand style of Art restored; in Fresco and in Watercolour", and that the pictures exhibited would constitute "Real Art, as it was left ... by *Raphael* and *Albert Durer*, *Michael Angelo* and *Julio Romano*".<sup>119</sup> Moreover, this interpretation

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<sup>115</sup>Erdman, 1998, p. 527.

<sup>116</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>117</sup>Erdman, 1988, p. 531.

<sup>118</sup>See the reference to this in the discussion of Fuseli's lecture on colour in fresco painting. Blake's knowledge of this aphorism is evidenced by a reference in his annotations to Reynolds's fifth discourse. Erdman, 1988, p. 654.

<sup>119</sup>The opening date of Blake's exhibition has not been definitively established; Bentley noted that the first reference to it was not made until September 1809, despite Blake asserting in the 'conditions of sale' included in the *Descriptive Catalogue* that the exhibition would close on September 29th

of Blake's intentions regarding his adoption of the word 'fresco' to describe his paintings may also account for a seeming anomaly between the testimony of John Linnell regarding Blake's knowledge of tempera technique and what we have seen he must have already learned via Cumberland. Linnell told Gilchrist that he gave Blake his copy of Cennini's treatise (that published by Giuseppe Tambroni in Rome in 1821, regarded as a none-too-accurate copy of the one in Florence that Cumberland read) and that Blake, having read it, was "gratified to find that he had been using the same materials and methods in painting as Cennini describes, particularly the carpenter's glue."<sup>120</sup> Concordances between Blake's paintings and other artworks have been explained by his biographers through recourse to Blake's own comments about his extensive visual studies,<sup>121</sup> and therefore as "the unconscious outpourings of a well-stocked mind."<sup>122</sup> Perhaps this was the case with Cennini - by the 1820s Blake may have forgotten his earlier exposure to Cennini's descriptions of materials and techniques via George Cumberland. An alternative possibility, however, is that there was a more conscious self-fashioning taking place - a desire, on Blake's part from c. 1800 onwards, to secure his place as both a restorer and innovator, much as Cimabue and Giotto had been characterised by Vasari, in the lineage of European art history.

Blake's usage of the term 'fresco', then, can also be understood as a form of self-identification with medieval and early Italian Renaissance artists. This has been implicitly argued by Robin Hamlyn, who also related Cennini's treatise to Blake's experimentation with fresco and, additionally, argued that Blake's illustrations of Dante's *Divine Comedy* were a further cementing of Blake's identification with Giotto (through both the Dante-Giotto connection and the fact that Cennini traced his own artistic lineage directly back to Giotto). Hamlyn moreover read Blake's annotation about Gothic art on his engraving of Joseph of Arimathea (a copy of Michelangelo's figure) as evidence that Blake conceived of himself as entering into this lineage as early as the 1770s.<sup>123</sup> Furthermore, the earliest and most

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1809. Bentley thus conjectured that the exhibition opening may well have been delayed, and it is generally accepted, given the contemporary evidence, that it stayed open for a considerable time after that closing date initially given by Blake. Bentley, 1969, p. 219 and (for the quotation) p. 528.

<sup>120</sup>Gilchrist, 1863, p. 369.

<sup>121</sup>"[Blake] brought with him [to the house of Charles Aders] an engraving of his Canterbury Pilgrims for Aders One of the figures resembled one in one of Aders's pictures 'They say I stole it from this picture, but I did it 20 years before I knew of the picture - however in my youth I was always studying this kind of paintings[sic]. No wonder there is a resemblance.'" The above words were Henry Crabb Robinson's, referencing an occasion on which he met Blake at the house of the collector Charles Aders in 1825. Bentley, 1969, p. 310.

<sup>122</sup>Bindman, describing Anthony Blunt's conclusion about Blake's artistic imitation. David Bindman, 'Blake's Theory and Practice of Imitation', in Essick and Pearce, eds., 1978, p. 95.

<sup>123</sup>Hamlyn, 2003, pp. 36-37.

reliable description of Blake's technique further corroborates this argument. This is given by John Thomas Smith, who knew Blake for over forty years (having been friends with the latter's younger brother). Smith's account is notable for its attribution of a self-identification on Blake's behalf with the techniques of early Italian artists:

Blake's modes of preparing his ground, and laying them over his panels for painting, mixing his colours, and manner of working, were those which he considered to have been practised by the earliest fresco painter, whose productions still remain, in numerous instances, vivid and permanently fresh.<sup>124</sup>

The final segment of Smith's account also relates directly to the perceived durability attributed to fresco and thus its concomitant quality of existing as a testament to artistic skill. The irony here is the difficulty of applying such a descriptor to the majority of Blake's 'frescoes' which in many cases, thanks to the instability of the medium he used, have deteriorated significantly.

However, the link forged between Blake and those particular predecessors was not solely based on self-interest and the desire to create and consolidate a reputation. The term 'fresco', for Blake, very strongly denoted religious meaning, and this interpretation is reinforced by Gilchrist's explanation of the genesis of Blake's 'fresco' technique: "Joseph, the sacred carpenter, had appeared in vision and revealed *that* secret to him."<sup>125</sup> As Joyce Townsend and Bronwyn Ormsby (discussing the tendency in Blake studies to focus on the message of his work rather than the medium) insightfully phrased it, for Blake "the medium *is* also part of the message."<sup>126</sup> Blake's tempera process allowed him to combine the brilliancy created by his white priming layers - which Linnell said that the artist "certainly laid [...] on too much like plaster on a wall" - with the kinds of materials that were repeatedly employed by early painters in their efforts to create an impression of glory and preciousness and inculcate a sense of awe and devotion in their viewers.<sup>127</sup> Recent analysis demonstrated that the pigment ultramarine blue, particularly distinctive in the paintings produced by Simone Martini and his fourteenth-century Sienese circle and exceptionally expensive, is a staple of the Butts tempera series, and Blake extolled one of the benefits of 'fresco' being its allowing the artist to use gold and

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<sup>124</sup> John Thomas Smith, *Noellekens and his Times*, vol. II (London, 1828) p. 472.

<sup>125</sup> Gilchrist, vol. I, 1863, pp. 168-169.

<sup>126</sup> Joyce Townsend and Bronwyn Ormsby, 'Blake's Painting Materials, Technical Art History, and the Legacy of G.E. Bentley', in Karen Mulhallen, ed., *Blake in Our Time* (Toronto and London: University of Toronto Press, 2010) p. 80.

<sup>127</sup> Gilchrist, vol. I, 1863, p. 69.

silver leaf in their paintings, which were obvious signifiers of divinity in early art.<sup>128</sup>

In conclusion, then, Blake did use the term ‘fresco’ to denote and publicise a certain set of physical or stylistic characteristics - the medium’s enabling an artist to privilege and preserve outline, as opposed to creating the kind of chiaroscuro-filled, blurred paintings exhibited by Blake’s contemporaries that were encouraged by the malleability of oil paint - but these characteristics were common to both fresco and tempera painting. Of the two terms, ‘fresco’ had more artistic and cultural currency than ‘tempera’, and this chapter has attempted to demonstrate that Blake therefore privileged the ideological connotations of the term ‘fresco’ above its literal meaning. One driving motivation behind this activity was undoubtedly the desire to have his works - the Butts tempera series and the later fresco paintings displayed in the 1809 exhibition - recognised as equal to such monumental artistic achievements as Raphael’s Stanze fresco cycles, which had been exalted as the ultimate artistic paradigm by authorities throughout the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. However, there remains one final point to be made regarding Blake’s engagement with ‘fresco’ painting. As this chapter has discussed, in 1809 the artist publicly made the rather grandiose claim that he had “restored” the “ancient method of fresco painting.” Regardless of whether or not Blake did truly believe that his paintings could be considered frescoes, it is true that he did effect a restoration of sorts - not of fresco painting, in the generally-accepted definition of its materiality, but of tempera painting, which had been largely displaced by oil as a medium not long after the epoch of Raphael. His drawing attention to the importance and power of fresco, however, anticipated (if not sowed the seeds for, due to Blake’s relative obscurity) the interest in appropriating the medium to large-scale decorative projects in England that reached its apex in the decades devoted to the Westminster fresco project. Moreover, Blake specifically referenced Westminster Hall as an ideal locus for the creation of “compartments” to be “ornament[ed] ... with Frescoes”; Westminster Hall just under forty years later was the space used for the exhibitions of the drawings, cartoons and specimens of frescoes executed for the multiple competitions held for the Westminster Palace decoration project.<sup>129</sup> Blake’s impassioned advocacy of fresco can therefore be seen as a example of his “delivering the burning messages of prophecy” with which this chapter began. The remaining investigation of this thesis will include further consideration of Blake’s position in relation to the wide-spread public interest in the methods and material of monumental painting, set within a wider exploration of the role played by another

<sup>128</sup> “... real gold and silver cannot be used with oil, as they are in all the old pictures and in Mr. B.’s frescos.” Erdman, 1998, p. 531.

<sup>129</sup> Erdman, 1988, p. 527. The “Invention of a Portable Fresco” was Blake’s claim to innovation, following on from his recovery of ancient fresco painting.



experimenter with early Italian techniques and style - William Dyce.

## Chapter 9

# The (Re)Discovery of Fresco Painting in Nineteenth-Century Britain, Part II: William Dyce, “The First of the Pre-Raphaelites” and “Leader of the Frescanti”.

The preceding chapters of this thesis have focused on three separate artists, illuminating the various strands of their engagement with early Italian art in the decades either side of 1800. To make William Dyce (Fig. 151) the final subject for this study is to produce a synthesis of this topic, for it was in the person of Dyce, in the era of Queen Victoria and her art-loving Consort Albert, that these multiple forms of engagement with the Italian primitives coalesced. Dyce’s primary occupation was as a painter, but both his professional career and personal life encompassed a wide scope of intellectual, educational, ecclesiastical, scientific and aesthetic interests. As an artist, Dyce painted devotional subjects in a recognisably Quattrocento register, studied and revived the technique of *buon fresco*, and taught an “ethical” art history that privileged the early Italian school. This term was Lindsay Errington’s, and labelled as such in contradistinction to the organic theory advocated by contemporaries of Dyce such as Wilkie, who followed the Vasarian conception of the development of the visual arts.<sup>1</sup> Other endeavours connected to his demonstrable interest in early Italian art, culturally and contextually, include his founding of the

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<sup>1</sup>See Lindsay Errington, ‘Ascetics and Sensualists, William Dyce’s views on Christian art’, *Burlington Magazine*, 134 (1992) pp. 491-497.

Motett Society in 1844, intended to facilitate the study of neglected early Church music; his literary exchange with John Ruskin in 1851 concerning the correct planning and decorating of churches; and, much earlier than either of these examples, his status as a potential ordinand at the (Catholic) English College in Rome in 1828.<sup>2</sup>

Scholarship on Dyce has been unanimous in labelling him a true early Victorian polymath.<sup>3</sup> However, the same scholarship has also been almost as unanimous in citing this attribute as responsible for his failure to rank as a great British painter alongside such luminaries as Turner.<sup>4</sup> This perceived variability in the quality of his output is undoubtedly one explanation for the relative paucity of literature focused exclusively on his career.<sup>5</sup> William Vaughan lamented, in a review of the only monograph on the artist to date (published as long ago as 1976) that “the task of sorting out Dyce’s *oeuvre* in detail remains to be done ... Scholars do not flinch from devoting such time to artists like Titian or Rembrandt, but who will make a similar sacrifice for Dyce?”, and indeed no-one, thus far, has undertaken this task.<sup>6</sup> Lack of

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<sup>2</sup>Dyce’s 1851 publication *On Shepherds and Sheep* was a response to Ruskin’s *Notes on the Construction of Sheepfolds*, and disputed Ruskin’s characterisation of priests as God’s “messengers”, Dyce (a High Anglican) believing wholeheartedly in the authority of the church. The information concerning Dyce’s potential career in the Catholic priesthood comes from a letter written by the painter Friedrich Overbeck to a fellow Nazarene, Eduard von Steinle, in 1834, and is quoted in William Vaughan, *German Romanticism and English Art* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979), pp. 191-192.

<sup>3</sup>See, for example, Quentin Bell, *Victorian Artists* (London, 1967) p. 23; Marcia Pointon, *William Dyce: A Critical Biography* (Oxford, 1979) and Olga Ferguson, ‘Introduction’, in Jennifer Melville, ed., *William Dyce and the Pre-Raphaelite Vision*, exh. cat. (Aberdeen: Aberdeen City Council, 2006) p. 9.

<sup>4</sup>Whilst Dyce is accorded a chapter in the Redgrave brothers’ *A Century of Painters of the English School* (London, 1866), he does not, to the best of this author’s knowledge, feature in any of the later editions of Allan Cunningham’s *Lives of the Most Eminent British Painters*, first published between 1829 and 1833. This lack of inclusion may not, potentially, be in any way related to Dyce’s artistic abilities but rather his religious beliefs, Cunningham having been a staunch Protestant. A rather compelling contemporary assessment of Dyce’s level of fame is found in an anecdote related by the writer A.N. Wilson in a 2009 review of Jeremy Paxman’s book *The Victorians*: “When I was sitting on the English Heritage committee to decide who deserved a blue plaque, I was thunderstruck by the fact that William Dyce, one of the very greatest British artists of all time, and the personal favourite of the Prince Consort, was turned down as being of less eminence than Jimi Hendrix or Dodie Smith.” A.N. Wilson, ‘Review: What the Victorian artists did for us’, *The Guardian* (22nd February 2009): <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2009/feb/22/history-victorian-artists-jeremy-paxman>.

<sup>5</sup>Dyce has received more posthumous attention than both Callcott and Patch, although obviously nowhere near the level of that paid to William Blake. In addition to the inclusion of Dyce in exhibitions and literature assessing, variously, the British school, the Scottish school, the Victorian era and the Pre-Raphaelites, the primary scholarship exclusively focused on Dyce is, chronologically, the centenary exhibition of his work held in 1964 at Aberdeen Art Gallery (owners of the largest corpus of his work), Marcia Pointon’s 1976 monograph on the artist, and the more recent exhibition held at Aberdeen entitled *William Dyce and the Pre-Raphaelite Vision* (2006). Of the non-exclusive scholarship on Dyce, Francina Irwin’s chapter on the artist’s life and career, which can be found in David and Francina Irwin, *Scottish Painters at Home and Abroad 1700-1900* (London: Faber, 1975), and William Vaughan’s discussion of the artist within the context of the reception of German art and literature in early-nineteenth-century Britain - Vaughan, 1979 - deserve mention.

<sup>6</sup>William Vaughan, ‘Review of ‘William Dyce 1806-1864: A Critical Biography’ by Marcia

time and space means that this investigation cannot answer Vaughan's plea, and has no pretensions to offer a definitive and comprehensive account of Dyce's *oeuvre*. In attempting to negotiate and draw some conclusions about Dyce's relationship with early Italian art, though, it does aim to shed new light on the previously opaque early segment of his career - roughly 1825-35 - and to offer the first detailed analysis of Dyce's recorded examination of Italian fresco painting, which took place in 1845 and was inspired by his commission to execute a fresco in the newly-built Palace of Westminster.

## Disentangling Dyce's Early Career.

William Dyce has always sat uneasily in the conventional narrative of nineteenth-century British art. Most frequently, he is designated simultaneously both a forerunner and, conversely, a follower of the Pre-Raphaelites, as was the case in the recent Pre-Raphaelite exhibition at the Tate Gallery, London:

Some imaginative early-Victorian artists, such as William Dyce, later a friend and follower of the Pre-Raphaelites, had already begun to look to early periods in the history of art for alternatives to what they saw as conventional and crass in the art of the nineteenth century.<sup>7</sup>

One cannot disagree with the fact that elements of Pre-Raphaelite practice and technique inform some of Dyce's later pictures, but to view this as evidence of Dyce being a mere follower, or imitator, of the Pre-Raphaelites is a huge misconstruction, given his pre-existing interests and career.<sup>8</sup> William Michael Rossetti recognised the inherent tension in such an understanding of Dyce and tactfully attempted to defuse it:

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Pointon', *The Burlington Magazine*, 123 (1981) p. 315. The catalogue of the Dyce exhibition of 2006 opens with the comment that Dyce's reputation has "languished on the fringes of art history." *Ibid.*, note 4.

<sup>7</sup>Tim Barringer, Jason Rosenfeld and Alison Smith, eds., *Pre-Raphaelites: Victorian Avant-Garde*, exh. cat. (London: Tate Publishing, 2012) p. 10. Moreover, in the first section of the exhibition catalogue, Ford Madox Brown is foregrounded as the potential inventor of, or primary influence on, Pre-Raphaelitism; Dyce is mentioned, but with no especial significance. *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25. See, for three other of the many examples of this interpretation, Timothy Hilton, *The Pre-Raphaelites*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1970) pp. 126-128, Mary Bennett, *Artists of the Pre-Raphaelite Circle*, exh. cat. (London: National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside in association with Lund Humphries, 1988) p. 56 and Christopher Wood, *Victorian Painters*, 3rd. ed. (Suffolk: Antique Collector's Club, 1995) pp. 26-28. Allen Staley also recognised, interrogated and ultimately confirmed this claim: 'William Dyce and Outdoor Naturalism', *The Burlington Magazine*, 105 (1963) pp. 470-477.

<sup>8</sup>Marcia Pointon details the differences between Dyce's 1850s paintings and those by contemporary Pre-Raphaelite followers. See Pointon, 1979, p. 146.

Lewis and Dyce had taken some steps in the same direction -the former with delicate completeness of detail, the latter with definition and some degree of severity of form; and, as the movement progressed, both have, to a considerable extent, moved on in the same track, although it would be most unfair to these eminent men to class them amid the followers of a cause of which they were the independent forerunners.<sup>9</sup>

Indeed, it is infinitely more appropriate to understand the relationship between Dyce and his younger contemporaries in the 1850s and early 60s as reciprocal, as was demonstrated in the 2006 Aberdeen exhibition.

That William Dyce was a forerunner of the Pre-Raphaelites is both more and less problematical at the same time. Dyce was famously the enabler of the Brotherhood in his encouraging John Ruskin to reach an aesthetic appreciation of their work. In Ruskin's words: "My real introduction to the whole school was by Mr. Dyce R.A., who dragged me, literally, up to the Millais picture of the *Carpenter's Shop*, which I had passed disdainfully, and forced me to look for its merits."<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, William Holman Hunt attested to a strong relationship with Dyce which was productive both artistically and materially.<sup>11</sup> Hunt also claimed that, in conjunction with Herbert, Maclise and others, Dyce had introduced "the *Early Christian* school" into England many years before the founding of the PRB.<sup>12</sup> The date at which Dyce did this, and exactly what kind of "*Early Christian* school" he introduced is what is at issue, however, since there is a lack of visual or documentary evidence to assist any interpretation. Two assumptions which have frequently been made about Dyce's early career require examination. First, that the influence of the German group of painters called the Nazarenes, with whom Dyce came to be strongly associated, outweighed that of early Italian art itself in Dyce's work, and, second, that there was an evident progression in Dyce's art from his early paintings exhibiting more typical characteristics of the 'British style' of the early decades of the nineteenth century - a (Venetian-influenced) concern with colour and a painterly treatment of form - to a more severe aesthetic, redolent of fourteenth-century art, in the 1840s (Figs. 152 and 153).<sup>13</sup> Is the characterisation of Dyce as a 'British

<sup>9</sup>William Michael Rossetti, *Fine Art* (London, 1867) pp. 158-159. This volume was a compilation of Rossetti's art criticism over the preceding decade or so; the chapter in which this assessment of Dyce appeared was titled 'The International Exhibitions of Art: London, 1862'.

<sup>10</sup>Letter from Ruskin to Ernest Chesneau dated 28th December 1882. Thomas Wise, ed. *Letters from John Ruskin to Ernest Chesneau* (London: Privately Printed, 1894) pp. 21-22.

<sup>11</sup>See Hunt, vol. 1, 1905, pp. 42-67 and p. 229. Dyce gave Hunt two commissions, in 1850 and 1851, that helped to ease the younger artist's financial difficulties at that time.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 175-176. The italics are Hunt's.

<sup>13</sup>See, for example, William Vaughan's contention that Dyce's *Judgement of Solomon* of 1835, to be discussed shortly, does "not reveal even even modest deviations from the Venetian mode", and that it was only in his *Paolo and Francesca*, exhibited at the Royal Scottish Academy in 1837, that

Nazarene' correct, however? In searching for the missing links, both literal and visual, between Dyce and the Nazarenes, have we overlooked those of Dyce and the Italian primitives? This investigation will now turn to the pre-eminent source material for Dyce's life and career, the abortive attempt of his son to write the artist's life, and a number of contemporary reviews of Dyce's early work in a search for answers to these questions.

Aberdeen Art Gallery possesses a typescript of an undated and unpublished manuscript entitled *Life and Writings of William Dyce, R.A., 1806-1864. Painter, Musician and Scholar - by his son James Stirling Dyce*.<sup>14</sup> Stirling Dyce (1853-1908) had begun writing a life of his father by 1896, when he publicly advertised for material relating to his subject.<sup>15</sup> It is tempting to conjecture that Stirling Dyce conceived the idea of publishing the life of his father, which he himself stated was intended to "vindicate his character", following the (negative) attention attracted by Arthur Herbert Church's restoration of the Houses of Parliament frescoes in 1894, and that perhaps this also provides an explanation for the failure to publish the book.<sup>16</sup> Whatever the circumstances of this first attempt to publish a monograph on the artist, what is of interest are the assertions made by Stirling Dyce about his father's early career.<sup>17</sup> Unsurprisingly, the section of the Dyce Papers relating to Dyce's earlier career, and particularly the period before 1830, is heavily outweighed by later material.<sup>18</sup> In comparing the first chapter of Stirling Dyce's

his "stylistic 'primitivism'" began (Vaughan, 1979, p. 192). Furthermore, Errington interpreted Dyce's artistic style and theory as being in direct opposition to one another: "[Dyce] began as a rich, painterly artist admiring the Venetians, influenced by Reynolds and lavish with chiaroscuro. His work then became increasingly linear, shadowless, hard-edged and flat." (Errington, 1992, p. 491).

<sup>14</sup>This material is commonly referred to as the Dyce Papers, and in references abbreviated to DP, a convention followed in this thesis. A microfiche version of the Dyce Papers is also held in the archive of the Tate Gallery, London.

<sup>15</sup>"Dyce, James Stirling". AKL Online (accessed 25/04/2012). Stirling Dyce placed advertisements in *The Morning Post* (14/07/1896), *The Athenaeum* (11/07/1896) and *The Academy and Literature* (11/07/1896) requesting that readers forward him "any letters of [Dyce's] or any correspondence relating to his work."

<sup>16</sup>"Fine Art Gossip. Mr. E.[sic] Sterling[sic] Dyce has finished the elaborate and authoritative biography of his father, the distinguished Royal Academician and authority on matters musical, which will appear as 'The Life, Correspondence and Writings of William Dyce, Painter, Musician and Scholar.'" This notice appeared in *The Athenaeum* of April 7, 1900, and detailed that Stirling Dyce's biography would comprise two volumes and cover all aspects of Dyce's career, also including correspondence with Gladstone and Ruskin. Inexplicably, however, the volumes were never published.

<sup>17</sup>At this juncture, it is necessary to reiterate the point made by Marcia Pointon that Stirling Dyce was by no means a reliable narrator of Dyce's early life, having been only eleven at the time of his father's death, nor an objective narrator of the artist's later career. Having said that, comparisons with extant material in other archives demonstrates that Stirling Dyce transcribed his father's correspondence and published works faithfully.

<sup>18</sup>Indeed a misconception that a segment of Stirling Dyce's typescript - that focused on the period 1825-30 - was destroyed or misplaced during the war was very recently rebutted by Ann Steed: 'William Dyce, his Training and the Formation of his Style,' in Melville, ed., 2006, pp.

typescript with the account of the corresponding section of Dyce's life and career given by James Dafforne in *The Art Journal* of 1860, it is clear that the vast majority of Stirling Dyce's information derives from the earlier publication, and that he stumbled across no new material of any great significance.<sup>19</sup> As for Dafforne's article, which was written during Dyce's lifetime, one wonders what, if any, input Dyce himself may have had; Dafforne himself was an artist who exhibited at the R.A., and anecdotes indicate a personal relationship.

William Dyce holds a somewhat dubious place in the history of the Royal Academy Schools. Having allegedly overcome parental opposition to an artistic career with the aid of none other than Sir Thomas Lawrence, the Academy's fourth President, Dyce moved to London and enrolled as a pupil in 1825 before abandoning his academic studies to travel to Rome with the miniaturist Alexander Day.<sup>20</sup> According to Dafforne and Stirling Dyce, during this first (nine-month) visit, Dyce's "tendencies were chiefly towards classical art; and in painting his idols were Titian, and Nicholas Poussin, whose works he studied with great ardour."<sup>21</sup> It was not until Dyce's second trip to Rome in 1827 that, according to his biographers, his "tendency towards what is termed Pre-Raffaellite Art first developed itself."<sup>22</sup> It is significant that both Dafforne and Stirling Dyce then continue to emphasise strongly that Dyce was not influenced in any way by the Nazarenes. In fact, both biographers claimed that Dyce was completely unaware of the work of his German contemporaries, with Stirling Dyce developing this conceit thus:

without the smallest intercourse with the Germans then in Rome and ignorant even of the existence of the new school of Purists, or as he believed they were even then termed Pre-Raffeallites [sic], he began as they did to reject Art exclusively in its most moral and religious aspect.<sup>23</sup>

The motivations of Dyce's biographers for making this outlandish claim will be explored shortly. It is obvious that Dyce cannot have been ignorant of the Nazarenes in 1825, let alone 1827. A charming portrait sketch of Dyce by the artist John Partridge - drawn in Rome in 1825 and now in the National Portrait Gallery, London (Fig. 154) - is testament to the fact that Dyce was part of the newly-established British Academy in Rome circle of which Charles Eastlake was an integral part - and Eastlake, of course, both knew the Nazarenes personally and a great deal about their art, having written an article about contemporary art in Rome, heavily featuring

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15-22. Steed pointed out that this arose from a mistake in pagination.

<sup>19</sup>Much of Stirling Dyce's first chapter is a mere paraphrasing of Dafforne's article.

<sup>20</sup>Pointon, 1979, p. 14.

<sup>21</sup>DP, Chapter I, p. 16.

<sup>22</sup>Dafforne, 1860, p. 293.

<sup>23</sup>DP, I, p. 19.

the group, for the *London Magazine* in 1820.<sup>24</sup> Scholars such as William Vaughan and Keith Andrews, whose investigative focus was the threads of influence between the Nazarenes and British art, thus understandably poured scorn on this claim; so too did Marcia Pointon.<sup>25</sup> However, the zeal to relocate the Nazarenes in Dyce's career has somewhat overshadowed discussion of his relationship with the Nazarene's original source-material - fourteenth-century Italian art. It is to an assessment of Dyce's relationship with the Italian primitives that this chapter will now turn.

Particularly relevant to this question is the one piece of significant information offered up by Stirling Dyce that is absent from Dafforne's account of Dyce's life and career. In regard to Dyce's formative years in Aberdeen, his son wrote that there was a paucity of artworks in the city, to the detriment of aspiring painters:

While a boy, [Dyce] had very few, hardly any opportunities of seeing pictures; the city of Aberdeen scarcely possessing at the time a single picture of merit ... His knowledge of art was exclusively derived from prints and in particular from Landon's five volumes of outlines of the works of Raphaelle[sic], Domenichino, Poussin, and Albano, which he possessed and poured over until he had learned every design by heart. One effect of this partial and one-sided study was to lead him, if not to over-rate the value of linear composition in painting, and to look upon a picture too much as a sort of coloured bas-relief, at least to inspire him with ardent admiration of classical art.<sup>26</sup>

Countless contemporary reviews and assessments of Dyce's work during his career emphasised the excellence of his drawing skills, and the engravings, in this context, must have been influential.<sup>27</sup> The artists whose work Dyce studied through Landon's engravings were obviously not primitives, and Landon himself did not operate within the *milieux* of the French version of the Nazarenes, Les Primitifs. However, despite the heavily Baroque style of Landon's engravings (Fig. 155), the reductive nature of the medium itself meant that Dyce's eye was trained, from an early age, to work from a severe, outline aesthetic - one can conjecture, therefore, that he would have been more sympathetic to the similar style of early Italian art than those of his contemporaries who trained in the Royal Academy in the early decades of the

<sup>24</sup>NPG 3944. There is also a portrait by Partridge of Eastlake in the same sketchbook.

<sup>25</sup>Vaughan, 1979, pp. 190-192 and Pointon, 1979, pp. 12-15.

<sup>26</sup>DP, I, p. 17.

<sup>27</sup>G.D. Leslie, son of the better-known artist and biographer Charles Robert Leslie, wrote of his early impressions of Dyce and noted the latter's abilities: "We all liked Mr. Dyce; he was one of the best Visitors I was ever under. He had a remarkably correct eye for drawing, and possessed an intimate knowledge of the technique of painting". G. D. Leslie, *The Inner Life of the Royal Academy* (London, 1914) p. 27. The Redgraves also related that Dyce "drew the figure correctly and with grace." Redgrave and Redgrave, vol. II, 1866, p. 558.



nineteenth century, where rich colour and illusionism were paramount.

Stirling Dyce, compounding his claim that Dyce was not influenced by the Germans, also stated directly that his father looked to early Italian masters himself. Following on from his assertion that Dyce, paralleling the Nazarenes, began to focus exclusively on the “moral and religious” qualities of art, he continued: “and as a consequence to perceive the great charms of the works of the devout masters of the fifteenth century.”<sup>28</sup> No journals, sketchbooks or correspondence survive to attest that this was indeed the case. However, the emphasis on the religious aspect of early Italian painting being the handle for Dyce’s way in to an appreciation and emulation of its aesthetic qualities is fundamental, as it accords with extant proof that Dyce himself was a deeply devout artist whose religious aesthetic was strongly Catholic. As we have already seen, Overbeck claimed that Dyce was a candidate for ordination at the English College. Stirling Dyce is silent on this front, but his biography transcribes letters that demonstrate that Dyce sustained a correspondence with the College’s Rector, Nicholas Wiseman (1802-1865), who would later become a Cardinal and then the first Archbishop of Westminster. Moreover, there is ample evidence in the Dyce Papers that Dyce was an ardent Tractarian who played a leading role in the ecclesiological movement.<sup>29</sup>

It is perhaps surprising that scholars such as Pointon and Vaughan have not paid more attention to Dyce’s early forays into ‘Catholic’ painting. Both art historians noted that a number of works with ‘Catholic’ titles were exhibited by Dyce in 1829, 1830 and 1835 but, as none of these were then known, extrapolated from the visual evidence of surviving works from the same period that Dyce did not begin painting in a Pre-Raphaelite manner until the 1840s.<sup>30</sup> It is true that those extant works by Dyce from the period between 1827 (the date of his first exhibited painting, *The Infant Bacchus Nursed by the Nymphs of Nyssa* (Fig. 156)) and 1835 do not exhibit any archaising qualities - many of these, however, were portraits, a genre which decidedly would not have repaid (financially, at least) any experimentation in such a style.<sup>31</sup> Contemporary reviews of Dyce’s works, though, give us some clues

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<sup>28</sup>DP, I, p. 19.

<sup>29</sup>One wonders whether, perhaps, the relationship between Dyce and his early mentor soured somewhat after Dyce’s failure to convert: the last letter from Wiseman to Dyce in the Dyce Papers is dated 1838, and a decade later Dyce’s first fresco executed in the House of Lords (the *Baptism of Ethelbert*) was criticised for its lack of Catholicity and “Spirit of Religion” by the *Dublin Review* - which was then edited by Wiseman. *Dublin Review* (Dec 1848), p. 503.

<sup>30</sup>Another advocate of this claim is Allen Staley: Allen Staley, ‘William Dyce and Outdoor Naturalism’, *The Burlington Magazine*, 105, (1963), pp. 470-477.

<sup>31</sup>The whereabouts of this painting is unknown. An oil sketch for it is in the collection of Aberdeen Art Gallery.

as to the style of those exhibited paintings and drawings that have not survived, and the response they received by the art world. Moreover, two paintings have surfaced since Pointon and Vaughan's investigations into Dyce which offer further insights into his early preoccupations and influences.

In 1829 William Dyce submitted three paintings and three "designs for pictures" to the annual exhibition of the Institute for the Encouragement of the Fine Arts in Scotland.<sup>32</sup> The current whereabouts of the three designs - none of which can be identified amongst the 162 lots of Dyce's own works in the catalogue of the sale of his studio contents in 1865 - are unknown, but they are of obvious interest for their subject matter: 'The Annunciation', 'The Visitation' and 'The Entombment'. The first two, with the Virgin as their primary focus, are an early example of Dyce's preoccupation with that problematic figure. In 1979 Pointon stated that the surviving paintings and drawings by Dyce of the Virgin and Child undoubtedly constitute a small percentage of a larger corpus of work.<sup>33</sup> Stirling Dyce asserted that such subjects comprised Dyce's output for a year or two immediately following his second visit to Rome and 'conversion' to early Italian art (although, again, none of these have survived), but after finding "no encouragement, or rather finding the very reverse of encouragement, in the production of works which nobody cared for", Dyce turned back to portraiture.<sup>34</sup> Stirling Dyce's comment about a lack of encouragement for painters of overtly Catholic subjects, such as Dyce, is borne out by both the contemporary reviews of the 1829 exhibition and a brief overview of the subjects painted by other artists at that time and in the succeeding years.

Reviews of the 1829 exhibition in which Dyce's works are singled out appear in three publications, all Scottish.<sup>35</sup> Common to all three is the praise lavished on Dyce's *Puck* - termed original and clever by the *Edinburgh Literary Journal*, and designated the "especial favourite" of all the history paintings exhibited by the reviewer for the *Caledonian Mercury* - and his *Church of Santa Trinita in Monti* (now lost).<sup>36</sup> The current whereabouts of the finished painting of Puck is unknown, but a charcoal drawing of the same subject in Aberdeen, dated 1825 (Fig. 159), shows

<sup>32</sup>William McKay and Frank Rinder, *The Royal Scottish Academy 1826-1916* (Glasgow, 1917) p. 96.

<sup>33</sup>Since then, at least one other Marian work attributed to Dyce has appeared on the art market, a watercolour entitled *Sacra Conversazione* (Fig. 157), sold in Germany in 2008 to a private collector, which is strongly reminiscent of Giovanni Bellini's San Zaccharia altarpiece (Fig. 158).

<sup>34</sup>DP, I, p. 21.

<sup>35</sup>These publications are the *Edinburgh Literary Journal*, the *Caledonian Mercury* and the *Aberdeen Journal*. It was common practice for reviewers to apportion their reviews over a series of issues, due to the size of such exhibitions, and thus the critiques of Dyce's submissions are not limited to solely one issue.

<sup>36</sup>*The Edinburgh Literary Journal*, 16 (Feb 28 1829), p. 224 and *Caledonian Mercury*, 16773 (Feb 28 1829).

the strong influence of Reynolds's painting of the same title (Fig. 160). Dyce's four remaining submissions were all religious - the aforementioned 'designs' for sacred subjects, and a large oil painting entitled *The Daughters of Jethro defended by Moses* (Fig. 161).<sup>37</sup> The *Moses* is discussed explicitly in two separate reviews, whereas the designs only feature in one. The diminution of certain religious works by Dyce through an absence of critical attention became somewhat of a pattern during his first five years back in Britain. On two more occasions, paintings of Christ are entirely overlooked in critical reviews of Scottish exhibitions - the *Christ crowned with thorns* and the *Dead Christ*, exhibited at the Scottish Academy in 1830 and 1835 respectively. Perhaps Dyce's contemporaries simply thought that these religious works were just not particularly impressive, and that his skill at portraiture, which he confessed to his friend Augustus Wall Callcott in 1832 was proving a successful field for him, was significantly greater.<sup>38</sup> More likely, however, the subjects named above were considered too devotional for a British, ostensibly Protestant, audience. This hypothesis is seemingly given further weight by the nature of the early religious painting by Dyce that *did* attract critical notice - the *Moses*. Dyce's subject in this instance was an Old Testament narrative scene which embodies the moral message of defending the weak and righting social injustice, and was thus hugely apposite for a decade dominated by the radical movement.<sup>39</sup> It was this didactic quality that rendered this painting, as opposed to the other religious works exhibited at the same time, worthy of attention and widely accessible.

It is clear from all three reviews that the style of those religious works exhibited by Dyce in 1829 put his reviewers in mind of early Italian art, rather than contemporary German. The *Edinburgh Literary Journal* - which had already stated a bias against those painters who trained in Rome and were preferred by the public to superior, native-trained artists - sounded the following note of warning:

We understand, [Dyce] has been studying at Rome; and, if he will only guard against the error of falling into an imitation of the ancient school of Leonardo da Vinci, to which we can discover a slight tendency, we venture to prognosticate his future attainment of no ordinary distinction in his profession. At all events, he is an *alumnus* of which Aberdeen has every reason to be proud.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>37</sup>The whereabouts of this painting was unknown to both Pointon and Vaughan when both were writing on Dyce. It reappeared at a sale at Sotheby's in 1987 and was purchased by Perth Museum and Art Gallery, where it remains today.

<sup>38</sup>"I am perfectly over-run with employment here - by one of those changes in fortune which one cannot account for, I have got all the employment in Edinburgh in portrait painting." Dyce to Callcott, Edinburgh, 26th May, 1832. DP, II, p. 90.

<sup>39</sup>The Radical Movement (an umbrella term for a multiplicity of groups and aims) of the first half of the nineteenth century campaigned for social, political and economic reform.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, note 32.

The *Caledonian Mercury* had the same concern about imitation, but saw the sources for Dyce's *Moses* as being slightly later:

There is a great contrast between [Puck] and another by the same artist: [Moses]. Puck is perfectly original: the other strikes the mind irresistibly as a pasticcio from Raphael and Titian. The study of these painters seems to have quite cramped and fettered the invention of the artist in this picture.<sup>41</sup>

This reviewer believed that the daughters of Jethro were not exhibiting the requisite degree of emotion, given the narrative (a criticism upheld by the reviewer in the *Aberdeen Journal*), and that their heads were "too close to their prototypes."<sup>42</sup> Despite these criticisms, the *Caledonian Mercury*'s review ends by praising Dyce for "imbu[ing] himself deeply with a feeling of the beauties of [the Old Masters'] styles", and urging him to turn to the study of nature - in accordance with the Reynoldsonian theory of imitation - as the fundamental next step in his artistic development.<sup>43</sup>

The two reviews quoted above were reprinted verbatim in the *Aberdeen Journal* of March 4th, 1829. Two months later the first of a series of communications concerning the fine arts in Scotland and the recent exhibition in Edinburgh, written by a J. Runciman from Old Aberdeen, appeared in the paper.<sup>44</sup> This final, and very significant, piece of criticism of Dyce's contribution to the 1829 exhibition is also the longest, and seems to be in dialogue with the other reviews of his paintings. The main issue with which Runciman's analysis of Dyce (which span five issues of the paper) grapples is that of the charge of imitation. Runciman's extensive critique of the *Moses* reveals that he too interpreted Dyce's work in the light of early Italian painting:

In a composition which fixes the mind of the painter on the higher requisites of intention, the dexterities and bravura of handling are very subordinate considerations. But the execution here at once reminds one of the primitive penciling of the early Italian masters. Whether this be an intended or unconscious imitation, it is difficult to judge; but the resemblance forces itself upon one immediately. It is true that it is natural for a young enthusiast at Rome to fall into some degree of unconscious imitation of that great school, as it is for an enthusiast in London to fall

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<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup>Unfortunately, attempts to identify Runciman any further have been unsuccessful; it is highly tempting to imagine him in some form a descendent of the Scottish painters of the late eighteenth century of the same name.

into an unconscious imitation of Reynolds. But all imitation is dangerous, and a man of genius cannot too soon purify his style from any such tendency.<sup>45</sup>

As the first sentence of this quotation infers, prior to this passage Runciman had extolled the virtues of *The Daughters of Jethro defended by Moses*, which he thought archaeologically faithful to its biblical source. He particularly singled out Moses, whose “glorious head redeems every flaw, and is worth more than the price set upon the whole picture” - “[his] lofty visage is an image of sublime moral power”.<sup>46</sup> Essentially, although Runciman had reservations concerning Dyce’s perceived imitation of earlier paintings, this was secondary to the overall success of the painting and Dyce’s bravery in attempting such a subject:

Considering the very limited encouragement for historical painting in this country, it requires no ordinary frame of mind or courage to enter that unprofitable field, as a candidate for public favour. The risks are appalling, the golden opportunities of very rare occurrence. The choice of a sacred subject, including so many figures, is a proof of honourable ambition, and the genius displayed by the young artist, in this extraordinary picture, fully justifies his arduous enterprise.<sup>47</sup>

Runciman’s response to Dyce is further noteworthy for being the sole critique to draw attention to the three drawings he exhibited. In this case, the author ardently defended Dyce against any charge of imitation without invention, and indeed suggested that his drawings precipitate genius. His comments warrant quoting in full:

[Dyce] exhibited ... three designs drawn with a pen, and slightly shaded with a wash of tint. The subjects are “The Annuciation” - “The Visitation” - and “The Entombment”. I have not seen this artist, but I have been assured that he is not more than one or two and twenty years of age; and that he has spent some time for professional improvement in Italy and London. It is very difficult for a young enthusiast at Rome to avoid, in some degree, falling into the manner of a favourite school or painter. Every man of genius is liable to this tendency. But there is a wide difference between the servile imitation of particular modes and forms, and the adoption of pure principles: the former cannot be

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<sup>45</sup> J. Runciman, *Aberdeen Journal*, 4250 (3rd June 1829).

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* Runciman ended his account of the *Moses* by detailing the location of the painting within the exhibition, interpreting its favourable hang as indicative of the high esteem with which the Royal Institution’s directors must have held it.

too highly condemned and shunned, as little less than a useless and disgraceful theft; the latter may enable a pupil to vie with his master. There are beautiful traces of Italian taste and feeling in these designs. And they at once remind us of the best old schools, and the best old masters. But they breathe an original spirit, and are valuable specimens of Dyce's invention. They are evidently what are termed "first thoughts," and necessarily have not had all the advantages of revision, although they show a fine vein of thinking, and a conception capable of treating sacred history with suitable elevation. The disposition of the draperies, the grouping and airs of the heads, manifest a great depth of acquirement, and excite high expectations of his future career. A picture painted from the Entombing, on a large scale, with a spirit equal to the design, would form a composition worthy of a distinguished place in any nobleman's gallery. But there are too many squeamish objections made by the morbid delicacy of fashionable taste to sacred subjects of deep pathos, that I would not advise the artist to risk the trial.<sup>48</sup>

Marcia Pointon has suggested that an undated drawing of the entombment in the British Museum (Fig. 162), annotated as having been given by Dyce to Mark Dessurne (a fellow artist) in 1842, could be identified as that exhibited in 1829.<sup>49</sup> She further used this as evidence of Dyce not working within a recognisably Nazarene or early Italian register at this stage of his career. If Runciman was correct, however, about Dyce's original designs utilising a wash of tint then the British Museum work cannot be the same piece.<sup>50</sup> Indeed the figures in Dyce's British Museum *Deposition* are unarguably redolent of Baroque artists such as Guido Reni, and do not display any of the asceticism of earlier periods of art - except, that is, for the standing figure on the left-hand side with his hands clasped, which is a good deal fainter than the others. This figure can be identified with that in a finished painting of the same subject, the *Lamentation* in the Aberdeen Art Gallery, the dating of which has engendered some controversy.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup>Pointon, 1979, p. 14.

<sup>50</sup>BMPD 1926,0901.1.

<sup>51</sup>Pointon suggested that this painting, which she knew only from an old photograph in the Witt Library, could be identified with the *Dead Christ* altarpiece Dyce exhibited in Edinburgh in 1835, an attribution which was very recently upheld by Michael Wheeler (*St John and the Victorians*, (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2012) p. 181). Lyndsey Errington, however, pointed out that the *Dead Christ* exhibited in 1835 was described as a lunette, a format which the painting in Aberdeen certainly is not. Errington identified the Aberdeen altarpiece with a description of a similar work in Dyce's studio seen by his fellow artist Charles W. Cope in 1847. See Errington, 1992. The altarpiece seen by Cope, however, seems much more likely to have been the *Deposition* referenced in a recently-discovered letter in Norfolk Record Office; William Mason, owner of Necton Hall in Norfolk, offered this painting to Norwich Cathedral after it turned out to be too big for the altar of Necton Church. This author will shortly be publishing an article on this recent archival

*The Daughters of Jethro defended by Moses* is stylistically closer to early Italian art than Dyce's drawing of the *Entombment*. The figures are arranged within a shallow frontal plane in a frieze-like arrangement, and the spectator's gaze is directed across the picture from the far left-hand side to the "glorious head" of the scene's protagonist Moses on the right by the graceful, interlinking attitudes of the seven daughters. Dyce's use of colour is reminiscent of the rhythmical repetitions and alterations of a limited range of tones evident in early Italian altarpieces such as Lorenzo Monaco's *Coronation of the Virgin*.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, in terms of visual prototypes, Dyce's painting is closer in theme and feeling to a rare fifteenth-century source than more numerous later treatments of the same subject. Visual depictions of this particular episode of Moses's life are particularly unusual. The two most famous renditions of the same subject are the fresco by Botticelli (Fig. 163) on the wall of the Sistine Chapel (in which the episode is one of multiple events within one pictorial space) and the oil painting by Rosso Fiorentino now in the Uffizi (Fig. 164) - and Dyce's treatment of the episode is very clearly related much more to the former than the latter (Figs. 165, 166 and 167).<sup>53</sup> Walter Friedlaender's comparison of the Fiorentino, painted c. 1524-1527, with the Botticelli (executed 1481-1482), the only known earlier representation of the Moses episode, highlighted the very different treatments of the story - Fiorentino's painting focuses on the violent engagement between Moses and the shepherds, with the daughters of Jethro cowering in the background, whereas Botticelli's Moses is infinitely more passive, depicted -

discovery.

<sup>52</sup>William Vaughan quotes an extract from a volume of *Kunstblatt*, published in 1828, attesting to the fact that contemporary German artists in Rome were united in their admiration of Dyce's colouring. According to the *Kunstblatt* account, opinions about other elements of Dyce's style were divided. Vaughan, 1979, p. 191.

<sup>53</sup>Despite this, however, there may be an interesting thematic correspondence between Dyce's *Moses* and that of Fiorentino. It has long been recognised that a now lost painting by Fiorentino - *Rebekah and Eliezer at the well* - was executed as a pendant to his *Moses*. The two paintings clearly illustrated good and bad moral values - the avarice and greediness of the shepherds contrasted with the kindness and generosity of Rebekah. John Peluso further argues that the two paintings formed an allegory concerning the rebirth of the arts in Rome under the auspices of Clement VII, symbolised by the prominent wells in both works (John Peluso, 'Rosso Fiorentino's *Moses Defending the Daughters of Jethro* and its Pendant: Their Roman Provenance and Allegorical Symbolism', *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, 20 (1976) pp. 87-106). During his lifetime, Dyce painted three of the four great biblical narratives concerning the living water (symbolised by a well) which are traditionally interpreted typologically - the *Moses* in 1829, *Jacob and Rachel* (first version executed in 1850) and *Christ and the Woman of Samaria* in 1860, and in that same year additionally executed a devotional picture of the male protagonist from the fourth, *Eliezer and Rebekah*. Dyce's paintings were assuredly first and foremost intended to communicate a religious message, but the gap between his first depiction of a well-related narrative and the second could be read as relating to his ambitions as a 'Catholic' painter and the lack of public encouragement towards such art that he experienced in that lacuna. See Wheeler, 2012, pp. 122-130 for a detailed explication of the Victorian understanding of biblical well stories.

post-conflict - in the action of watering the females' sheep.<sup>54</sup> Dyce's Moses is engaged with the shepherds, but verbally, rather than physically, and the daughters of Jethro occupy the majority of the pictorial space. Dyce's dependence on early Italian art in his depiction of this specific scene from the life of Moses is particularly singular when one recognises that those post-Renaissance artists - both Italian and French - who treated the same subject followed the model of Fiorentino, based on conflict and physicality, rather than Botticelli, whose painting was more faithful to its biblical source.<sup>55</sup>

There remains one last interesting correspondence to point out regarding Dyce's early works and their potential source matter during his second trip to Rome in 1827-1829, and it relates to the final work he exhibited at Edinburgh in 1829. This was a cabinet picture entitled *The Church La Trinita di Monti, Rome* [sic], now lost but much admired in the contemporary press. The exhibition of the Institute for the Encouragement of the Fine Arts in Scotland had opened by February of 1829, and Dyce had been in Rome since the autumn of 1827 - it is therefore very reasonable to conjecture that he executed his exhibition pieces in that Italian city, surrounded by superlative examples of European art of many different schools. The church of the Santissima Trinità dei Monti, at the top of the Spanish steps, was consecrated in 1585, and replete with late Renaissance art works and decoration. From 1820, however, a painting by Ingres entitled *Christ Giving the Keys of Heaven to St Peter* (Fig. 168) was placed on the high altar where presumably it would have been seen by Dyce, who surely would have examined the interior of the church during the process of painting an exterior view of it.<sup>56</sup> *Christ Giving the Keys of Heaven to St Peter* has, since the rise of formalist criticism in the twentieth century, functioned as an early painting demonstrative of cross-currents of influence between Ingres and the German Nazarenes in Rome in the first and second decades of the nineteenth century, with comparisons frequently being made between it and Nazarene paintings such as Friedrich Overbeck's *Raising of Lazarus* (Fig. 169) and *Christ's Entry into Jerusalem* (Fig. 170).<sup>57</sup> It would seem that Ingres's altarpiece may also have

<sup>54</sup>Walter Friedlaender, *Mannerism and Anti-Mannerism in Italian Painting* (New York, 1957) pp. 32-34.

<sup>55</sup>See the paintings by Sebastiano Ricci (1720s), Charles Le Brun (1686) and Nicolas Bertin (c. 1680-1704) and the drawing by Poussin in the Louvre for his now lost painting of the subject (c. 1647). The infinitely greater correspondence between Botticelli's evocation of the daughters of Jethro story and its literary source is pointed out in Valerie Hughes, 'The Prophet Armed: Machiavelli, Savonarola and Rosso Fiorentino's Moses Defending the Daughters of Jethro', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 51 (1988) pp. 220-225.

<sup>56</sup>This painting, begun by Ingres in 1818, was removed to the Luxembourg in 1841, and is now in the Musée Ingres, Montauban.

<sup>57</sup>See, for example, Andrews, 1964, p. 130 and Albert Boime, *Art in an Age of Counter-Revolution, 1815-1848* (Chicago, 2004) pp. 78-89. It is important to note that it has primarily been German and English art historians (Keith Andrews, Robert Rosenblum and David Hamann



been influential upon the young Dyce. In a preparatory drawing in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London for Dyce's *The Judgement of Solomon* (Fig. 171), a tempera cartoon design for a tapestry executed in 1836, the central figures in the foreground (the soldier raising his sword to follow Solomon's instruction to cleave the child in two, and the child's real mother appealing to both men in desperation) resemble a back view of Ingres's *Christ and Peter* (Fig. 172). The final cartoon, however, differs considerably from this drawing, evoking a much more Titian-esque composition (Fig. 173).<sup>58</sup>

## [De]-Isolating Dyce.

As the previous analysis has attempted to demonstrate, labelling Dyce as the conduit for solely Nazarene pictorial ideals in early-nineteenth-century British visual culture is a gross oversimplification. Living and working in Rome for months, sometimes years, at a time between 1825 and 1832 would have given Dyce ample opportunity to make his own study of early Italian art, both *in situ* and via the agency of picture dealers, who in the early nineteenth century were beginning to realise the market potential of such works. To emphasise the significant influence of the Italian primitives on Dyce's early development, as this chapter has done, is not to diminish the importance of his simultaneous contact with the Nazarenes, but rather to add to the picture of Dyce's early experiences.

Work on Dyce's early *oeuvre* and influences has, of course, been impeded by visual unfamiliarity with many works from this period. Modern attempts to situate Dyce within a pan-European context of artistic exchange have further been hampered by the early textual sources for his career, which clearly sought to create a "fiction of isolation" surrounding the artist. As we have already seen, both Dafforne and Stirling Dyce refuted any early connection with the Nazarenes. For what reason (or reasons), aside from general hagiography, did they perpetuate this

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being prime examples) who have explored links between Ingres and the wider artistic *milieux* of Rome, whilst their French counterparts have striven to protect the narrative of national 'isolation' for their master. This historiographical conceit is explored in a masterful essay by Mitchell Benjamin Frank entitled 'Ingres and the Nazarenes: A Historiographical Study' in Lorenz Enderlein and Nino Zchomelidse, *Fictions of Isolation: Artistic and Intellectual Exchange in Rome during the First Half of the Nineteenth Century* (Roma: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2006) pp. 67-78. Such contemporary nationalistically-based historiographical constructs are extremely significant in the context of accounts of Dyce's career, as will shortly be discussed.

<sup>58</sup>The *Judgement of Solomon* won Dyce £30 in a competition for prizes offered by the Trustees of the Board of Manufactures. The cartoon is now in the National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh. Another slightly more tangential connection between the artistic concerns of Ingres and Dyce is the presence of Botticelli's Moses fresco in Ingres's painting *Pope Pius VII in the Sistine Chapel* of 1814, which was exhibited in Paris in 1815 and 1826 and reproduced as a chromolithograph in 1836. This work is now in the National Gallery of Art, Washington. See Levey, 1960, pp. 291-306.

strategy, though? The actions of Dyce's early biographers can be understood within the context of cultural and political concerns specific to the mid nineteenth century, which will be outlined briefly here.

A notable theme of early biographies of major artists in the English tradition is the isolating of the subject's distinctive (often aggrandised) contribution to the visual arts: Thomas Lawrence's presidential address to the Royal Academy in 1823 initiated the constantly-repeated trope that Joshua Reynolds single-handedly raised the genre and quality of portraiture, and John Opie was supposedly described by Reynolds as having "united Caravaggio and Velasquez in one" in his history paintings, for example.<sup>59</sup> The emphasis, then, was quite obviously on invention and originality, both of which became significant *leitmotifs* of art-historical discourse in the nineteenth century.<sup>60</sup> Whilst the concept of invention was, of course, applicable to all branches of the visual arts, it had particular resonance for the genre of history painting. However, as William Vaughan detailed in an exploration of the nationalistic labels historically given to British art, the prevailing dictum that history painting was the only genre to which an artist should aspire was gradually eroded in the 1820s and 30s, as such art was displaced by infinitely more lucrative types of painterly production such as genre scenes, sporting or animal pictures and - most popular of all - landscape.<sup>61</sup> When brave artists like Dyce did attempt forays into the realm of history painting, then, there was an increased tension surrounding their output, and its invention - successful or otherwise - attracted a great deal of attention. Elizabeth Prettejohn, in a revisionist account of the relationship between late Victorian painting and Modernism, devoted a substantial proportion of her argument to evaluating the effect the perceived imitative nature of Aestheticism had on its position in the wider historiography of British art.<sup>62</sup> Modernist criticism of the art of the preceding age constructed the action of looking back to earlier art for inspiration as a feminine

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<sup>59</sup>Quoted in Junod, 2011, p. 202.

<sup>60</sup>Invention, as defined by Reynolds in his second discourse, was the artist's creating something new - or original - from the impressions accumulated in his brain, by which Reynolds meant what he or she had observed in nature and existing art works. The continuing centrality of invention to British art theory is attested to by its frequent inclusion in lectures by Royal Academy professors (Opie, given in 1807) and other leading art figures (Benjamin Robert Haydon, *Lectures on Painting and Design* published 1844-1846). An interesting example of the influence of value-terms such as invention and originality in early Victorian culture is an advertisement on the front page of the popular periodical *The Art Union* of 1845 announcing a series of prizes offered by "a Gentleman ... desirous of promoting the Arts", the first of which was "£100, or a Gold Goblet of equal value, with a suitable inscription, to the author of the best Historical Painting, being an original Design." *The Art Union*, 1 January 1845.

<sup>61</sup>See William Vaughan, 'The Englishness of British Art', *Oxford Art Journal*, 13 (1990) pp. 11-23.

<sup>62</sup>Elizabeth Prettejohn, 'From Aestheticism to Modernism, and Back Again', *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 2 (2006) pp. 1-16 ([www.19.bbk.ac.uk/index.php/19/issue/view/65](http://www.19.bbk.ac.uk/index.php/19/issue/view/65).)

one, as compared to masculine invention. Thus, Prettejohn concluded: "In the historiography of modern art, Victorian Aestheticism has consistently been configured as the feminized 'other' of manly modernism, something that is clearly reflected in its lower status within twentieth-century art-historical canons."<sup>63</sup> This hypothesis (although perhaps not in quite so explicitly gendered terms) is also applicable to the art-historical period preceding that discussed by Prettejohn, as is evidenced by the strategies employed by Dyce's earlier biographers to distance him from the charge of imitation. Despite publications such as *A Century of Painters of the English School* by the Redgraves, which appeared in 1866 and argued that English painters had made significant enough a contribution to European art as to warrant being termed a school, individual originality as an indicator of and contribution to this achievement was still the most desirable attribute for a painter.<sup>64</sup>

That it was Germany, and German artists, whom Dyce's biographers tried so hard to refute a suggestion of influence from is, of course, significant. By the mid nineteenth century it was abundantly clear that the British saw themselves in competition, artistically, with only two other nations - France and Germany.<sup>65</sup> And in terms of Christian painting, such a dominant topic following the advent of the Pre-Raphaelites, it was the 'modern German school' - the Nazarenes and their inheritors - who were Britain's main antagonists. As the numerous references to British periodicals discussing contemporary German art in the bibliography of William Vaughan's admirable study of the German influence on this country attest, Britain evinced a preoccupation with Germany's cultural development from the mid-1810s onwards.<sup>66</sup> In measuring individual and collaborative achievements against those of another country, then, a strong polemical aspect crept into such discourse, mirroring the content of such anti-French publications as Baynbrigge Buckeridge's *An Essay Towards an English School* of the early eighteenth century.<sup>67</sup> As Emma Winter has demonstrated, for the British the modern German school increasingly came to be identified with the renewal of the arts which took place in Munich under the aegis of Ludwig I, which gradually inculcated Anti-German sentiment of a far more complex nature.<sup>68</sup> Ludwig I was associated with those perennial plagues

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<sup>63</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>64</sup>See Julie Codell, 'Righting the Victorian Artist: The Redgraves' *A Century of Painters of the English School* and the Serialization of Art History', *Oxford Art Journal*, 23 (2000) pp. 95-120 for a detailed discussion of the aims and impact of the Redgraves' publication.

<sup>65</sup>For example, in a discussion of the forthcoming International Exhibition, the contributor to *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* of 1862 wrote: "To describe every picture, to designate every minor school, will of course be impracticable ... The entire world, in fact, contains but three extant schools - the French, the German, and the English." *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 91 (January-June 1862) p. 483.

<sup>66</sup>Vaughan, 1979, pp. 289-302.

<sup>67</sup>See the dedication in particular. Buckeridge, 1706.

<sup>68</sup>Emma Winter, 'German Fresco Painting and the New Houses of Parliament at Westminster,

Catholicism and absolutism, and whilst there was ample enthusiasm initially for following his example regarding large-scale state patronage of the visual arts, the manifestation of this in England - the decoration of the Palace of Westminster - was by no means the unequivocal success that its instigators and supporters hoped for. Dyce played an intrinsic role in the execution of the Westminster fresco scheme, and Dafforne and Stirling Dyce's striving to separate Dyce categorically from any suggestion of dependence on the Germans is a direct consequence of the disapprobation with which the establishment and public regarded the issue. It is Dyce's leading role in the Palace of Westminster decorative scheme, and in particular his early and exhaustive researches into fresco painting, to which this chapter will now turn.

## Decorating the New Palace of Westminster.

The name of William Dyce was, from the mid-1840s until his death twenty years later, inextricably linked with the very public, state-led project to employ large-scale fresco decoration inside the new Houses of Parliament, built by Charles Barry following the infamous fire of 1834.<sup>69</sup> Prior to charting Dyce's involvement with the project and examining his engagement with fresco painting, however, this shift in emphasis and subject invites a brief comparison with an artist analysed earlier in this thesis, and indeed throws his experiments with that medium into sharp relief.

A sobering measure of William Blake's dormant reputation in the three or so decades following his death is the complete absence of reference to him in any of the known literature and discourse, both public and private, concerned with the concerted attempts to deploy fresco - widely perceived as an elevated medium which showcased the "higher qualities of art" - in large-scale public decoration in Britain beginning in the 1830s.<sup>70</sup> Moreover, the locus for this application of the medium of fresco painting was none other than the New Palace of Westminster and, as was noted in Chapter 8 of this thesis, Blake specifically identified Westminster Hall in his *Descriptive Catalogue* as a pre-eminently suitable location for executing such works. Further pathos is heaped upon the Blake situation when his activity is considered in light of that occurring in Germany. As Gerald Bentley demonstrated, textual knowledge of Blake's life and art was disseminated early in that country through an

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1834-1851', *The Historical Journal*, 47 (2004) pp. 291-329.

<sup>69</sup>On the history of the Houses of Parliament see the following excellent and wide-ranging volume: Christine Riding and Jacqueline Riding, eds., *The Houses of Parliament: History, Art, and Architecture* (London: Merrell, 2000).

<sup>70</sup>Letter from Prince Albert to Charles Eastlake. Though, as Chapter 8 demonstrated, Blake's use of the term 'fresco' was unusual, given the endemic lack of knowledge of the medium (as will be explicated later in this chapter), Blake's comments regarding 'fresco' were unlikely to have been overlooked simply because they were factually incorrect.

essay written by Henry Crabb Robinson published in the journal *Vaterländisches Museum* in 1811.<sup>71</sup> Choosing Blake as his subject seems to have come about as a confluence of factors: first, Crabb Robinson was in need of a subject, having been asked to contribute an essay by the nascent journal's editor; that of Blake suggested itself, so Crabb Robinson remembered, following his experience of visiting the artist's one-man exhibition in 1809. Crabb Robinson's belief that a German audience might be more receptive to Blake's art and thoughts was presumably predicated on his knowledge of the writings of Romantics such as Wilhelm Wackenroder, Friedrich von Schlegel and Ludwig Tieck, which accorded fully with Blake's beliefs in their emphasis on the role of divine inspiration in the creation of art.<sup>72</sup> Whilst the Nazarenes have often been invoked in discussions of Blake's interest in 'gothic' art and techniques, it has frequently been stressed that despite their contemporaneity there were no substantive connections between the British artist and his German counterparts.<sup>73</sup> It is notable, however, that in his essay Crabb Robinson described Blake as a "Catholic in whom Religion and love of Art were perfectly united" - a characterisation that surely would have piqued the interest of the Lükasbruder.<sup>74</sup> Whether or not Blake's experiments in 'fresco' may have been a point of reference for the young German artists, their executions in that medium far surpassed Blake's in accuracy, monumentality and fame. By 1837 John Murray's *Handbook for travellers in southern Germany* was informing its readers - and (presumably unwittingly) appropriating almost exactly Blake's aspirational call-to-arms in the *Descriptive Catalogue* - that in Munich:

The arts of painting in fresco, in encaustic, and on glass, once believed to have been lost, but in truth only nearly forgotten from neglect, have been revived and also carried to their former perfection.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>71</sup>Henry Crabb Robinson, 'Blake', *Vaterländisches Museum*, 1 (1811) pp. 107-31.

<sup>72</sup>Although it is often construed that these writers had a particular preoccupation with the material culture of the medieval past, it is more accurate to say that their illumination of this era of artistic production was more a secondary by-product of their shift in emphasis from the rationality of art founded on classical principles to that inspired by imaginative creativity; in this sense they anticipated the Purist school of approach to early art. Keith Andrews and William Vaughan have discussed the influence of such German writers and intellectuals on the development of the Nazarenes.

<sup>73</sup>Crabb Robinson was the facilitator of the only known meeting between Blake and a contemporary artist. By his own account, he took Jacob Götzenberger to see Blake in February 1827 where they looked over the latter's Dante engravings. Crabb Robinson recorded the German artist as saying (when back in Germany): "I saw in England many men of talents, but only 3 men of Genius, Coleridge, Flaxman, & Blake, & of these Blake was the greatest." Edith Morley, ed., *Blake, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Lamb &c, being selections from the remains of Henry Crabb Robinson* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1922) pp. 18-19. Blake, for his part, was "interested apparently by Götzenberger." Bentley, 1969, p. 338.

<sup>74</sup>Quoted in Bentley, 1969, p. 452. Although the group was formed at the Vienna Academy and had moved to Rome by the time of the publication of Crabb Robinson's essay, they retained personal and artistic ties with their home country and likely knew of it. Several members of the Nazarenes converted to Catholicism in the second decade of the nineteenth century.

<sup>75</sup>John Murray, *Handbook for travellers in southern Germany* (London, 1837) p. 28.

As Emma Winter has cogently argued, Munich - and the spectacular achievements of Peter Cornelius in fresco painting engendered by the beneficent patronage of Ludwig I - was the dominant point of reference for the discussions regarding the decoration of the new Houses of Parliament.<sup>76</sup> Additionally, the impetus for employing fresco as the medium for decoration was provided by another German, the art historian Gustav Friedrich Waagen. Waagen was questioned in 1835 by a Select Committee formed to debate the best methods and strategies for generally ameliorating both the fine arts and design in Britain.<sup>77</sup> Waagen's testimony pivoted around the issue of patronage; he argued for the state employment of artists in public buildings - specifically citing the new Houses of Parliament as an ideal locus for such an undertaking - as the best means of enabling an honourable British school of history painting to flourish, and he suggested that "Fresco painting might herein be employed to advantage."<sup>78</sup> Both of Waagen's recommendations were heeded by a later Select Committee convened in 1841 to tackle the specific question of the Houses of Parliament decoration and its potential harnessing for the "Promotion of the Fine Arts in this Country".<sup>79</sup> As Winter contends, that this committee's existence, from inception to resolution, spanned only two months was predicated on the existing knowledge of fresco deriving from the enduring interest - fanned by the contemporary press - in the German example.<sup>80</sup>

The dominance of Germany as the country then excelling in the medium of fresco painting was extremely advantageous to William Dyce who, as this chapter

<sup>76</sup>Winter, 2004, pp. 291-329. One of the primary focuses of Winter's article is an explanation of the - at first glance - surprising choice made in the 1840s to both employ fresco and to deliberately model the state's artistic patronage on that of Ludwig I who, as a Catholic with absolutist tendencies, was antithetical to the British national self-image.

<sup>77</sup>Waagen was in England during this year in order to gather material for his 1837 publication *Kunstwerke und Künstler in England und Paris*. The remit of this chapter does not admit any concentrated discussion of the anxiety surrounding the state of the arts in Britain being played out institutionally (within the Royal Academy), in the public press, and through such select committees as that Waagen was a witness for throughout the nineteenth century. The biggest concern (prevalent in the eighteenth century but thrown into sharper relief with the advent of industrialisation) in the politics of visual culture was how and to what extent the arts should be harnessed for the benefit - i.e. the moral improvement - of the nation and, concomitantly, how to create a specifically British history painting, both free from inherited artistic paradigms but also capable of besting the island's continental antagonists. An accomplished account of the primary issues, set within the framework of public art exhibitions in London spanning the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, is given in Brandon Taylor, *Art for the Nation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), esp. pp. 29-99.

<sup>78</sup>Quoted in Winter, 2004, p. 306.

<sup>79</sup>The report of this committee was published June 18th 1841. *Parliamentary Papers*, 4 (1841) pp. 343-410.

<sup>80</sup>"When considered within the context of the debate surrounding the arts in Britain, the proposals presented by the select committee on the fine arts [in 1841], if not a foregone conclusion, had thus at least been well-rehearsed between 1835 and 1841." Winter, 2004, p. 308.

has explicated, had forged strong links with members of the Nazarene Brotherhood during the late 1820s and 1830s and was perceived in many quarters to have developed a painting style analogous to theirs. Clare Willsdon argues that Prince Albert, who was appointed Chairman of the Royal Commission for Fine Arts (formed following the report of the 1841 Select Committee), agitated for the employment of German artists - his compatriots - on the project; when this was thwarted, he “secured the next best alternative of the Germanophile and German trained ... Dyce”.<sup>81</sup> Commissions and sales records document Albert’s undoubted favour for Dyce, and indeed the two men seemed to have forged a friendship based on their shared intellectual interests.<sup>82</sup> The connection with Albert was undoubtedly a boon to Dyce, but evidence demonstrates that it was Charles Eastlake, who had also had extensive contact with the Nazarenes in Rome in the 1810s and 20s, who played a more tangible role in Dyce’s involvement with the Houses of Parliament decoration.

Following the resolution of the select committee in June 1841 to explore the viability of fresco painting, a series of competitions was arranged with the view of both ascertaining its suitability as a medium and also establishing which artists would create the best works. The competition announcement called for British artists to submit cartoons of subjects taken from “British history, or...the works of Spenser, Shakespeare, or Milton” by May 1843 to be displayed in Westminster Hall, with premiums offered for those judged the best.<sup>83</sup> Dyce, however, did not enter

<sup>81</sup>Willsdon, 2000, p. 30. Willsdon makes quite a few leaps here. There is no hard evidence for Albert demanding the employment of German artists (although many scholars have similarly asserted the Prince Consort’s intention to employ Germans, primarily predicted on a probably apocryphal statement by Ford Madox Brown that Albert approached Cornelius with a view to securing him for the commission during the latter’s stay in London - Cornelius supposedly told Albert to employ Dyce instead, though, as Emma Winter points out, Cornelius made no mention of Dyce in his evidence regarding fresco painting to the Select Committee in 1841). Nor is there evidence, as this chapter has already demonstrated, for Dyce having actually trained or studied under any of the German artists he met in Rome. Albert’s involvement with the Westminster project marked the beginning of his intense engagement with the visual arts in Britain, which reached its apex with the Great and Art Treasures Exhibitions in the mid-1850s in London and Manchester respectively. A thorough account of Albert’s role in British cultural politics is found in Winslow Ames, *Prince Albert and Victorian Taste* (New York: Viking Press, 1968).

<sup>82</sup>Dyce was given a number of royal commissions, including a share in the decoration of the garden pavilion at Buckingham Palace, a fresco at Osbourne and individual religious paintings. Albert also bought work by Dyce at exhibition, such as the *Madonna and Child* (Royal Collection). Vanessa Remington demonstrates the unprecedented informality that characterised the royal couple’s relationships with many of the artists they patronised, although her essay surprisingly does not discuss Dyce in any detail: Vanessa Remington, ‘Queen Victoria, Prince Albert and their relations with artists’, in Susanna Avery-Quash, ed., *‘Victoria & Albert, Art & Love’: Essays from two Study Days held at the National Gallery, London, on 5 and 6 June 2010*, e-publication (London: Royal Collection Trust and National Gallery, 2012) pp. 1-19.

<sup>83</sup>*Report of The Commissioners on the Fine Arts*, 22nd April 1842. See Thomas R. Boase, ‘The Decoration of the New Palace of Westminster’, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 17 (1954) pp. 319-358 for an extensive reconstruction of the sequence of events relating to the Westminster decoration project.

this first competition (which from the outset excited great public attention and was, on the whole, critically acclaimed) nor the second; Martin Shee's unheeded warning to the 1841 Select Committee regarding the disadvantages of the anonymous competition method for commissioning artists - namely, that established and well-regarded artists would not participate for fear of questionable judgements made by a committee formed of non-artists, causing their usurpation by young nobodies - may offer an explanation as to why, although Ford Madox Brown later claimed that Dyce by this point was "hopeless of his work attracting the English approbation of the day."<sup>84</sup> This was despite the fact that Dyce must have been more informed than most about the committee's activities due to his having given evidence regarding his knowledge of fresco painting at the first inquiry. In 1844, however, Eastlake personally requested that Dyce make a submission to the third competition which, on its announcement in November 1843, specifically requested specimens of fresco painting.<sup>85</sup> Moreover, Dyce was to thank Eastlake in a letter dated 16th July 1844 for the allocation to him of the subject *The Baptism of Ethelbert* following the announcement that May of the commission given to six artists - Richard Redgrave, William Cave Thomas, Charles West Cope, John Callcott Horsley, Daniel Maclise and Dyce - to "prepare cartoons, coloured sketches, and specimens of Fresco-painting".<sup>86</sup>

Eastlake was evidently aware of Dyce's multiple strands of engagement - theory, study and practice - with fresco painting, developed from his early visits to Italy. Material evidence of the longevity of Dyce's studies is provided by his donating, in January 1830, some "Specimens of the Ancient Paintings on the Walls of the Baths of Titus at Rome" to the Museum of the Scottish Antiquarian Society. The accompanying letter, written by Dyce and read out at the society's meeting of 25 January, evinces the artist's interest in the technicalities of the medium.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>84</sup>Ford M. Hueffer, *Ford Madox Brown: A Record of his Life and Works* (London, 1896) pp. 36-37. The author of Madox Brown's biography states that this text came from Madox Brown's lecture entitled 'Style in Art'.

<sup>85</sup>"Having satisfied ourselves respecting the attainments of many British Artists in the practice of Cartoon-drawing, and respecting their capacity to attain excellence in those qualities which are essential in Historical Painting, we now propose, in pursuance of the plan before announced by us, to invite artists to exhibit specimens in Fresco-painting of a moderate size". *Second Report of the Commissioners on the Fine Arts*, 22nd November 1843, p. 5. See William Vaughan, 'A 'Better Prospect'? The First Mural Scheme for the New Palace', *Apollo*, 135 (1992) pp. 312-315.

<sup>86</sup>"I easily trace your considerate hand in assigning to me the subject which, had the choice been left to myself, I should have selected." Dyce to Eastlake, quoted in Pointon, 1979, p. 89. For the resolution of the commissioners regarding the commissioning of the six artists to prepare full-scale cartoons for frescoes, see *Third Report of The Commissioners on the Fine Arts*, 4th May 1844, Appendix I, p. 9. The relationship between the two artists seems to have been reciprocal; material in the Dyce Papers relating to a proposal by the artist (dated around the early 1840s) for establishing a national museum of British art reveals that Dyce suggested appointing Eastlake curator of this institution. DP, X, pp. 344-358.

<sup>87</sup>*Archaeologia Scotia: or, Transactions of the Society of Antiquaries in Scotland*, vol. 3 (Edinburgh, 1831) pp. 315-316.



Dyce also, in parallel with two other countrymen, experimented with fresco himself at this point, painting arabesques in the Dyce family house in Mareschial Street in Aberdeen.<sup>88</sup> Dyce subsequently publicly mentioned his first-hand study and practice of “this ancient art” in his 1837 *Letter to Lord Meadowbank*, a treatise on the necessity for - and proposed scope and remit of - a Scottish school of design in order to stimulate superior artistic achievement, and it is likely this account that first marked him out as learned on the subject.<sup>89</sup> Additionally, a reference in a letter to Dyce from Cardinal Wiseman dated 1838 points to a preoccupation with executing frescoes that would be realised at the beginning of the following decade.<sup>90</sup> Another window into Dyce’s engagement with fresco painting is provided by two diary entries made by Benjamin Robert Haydon, which also showcase that artist’s mercurial temperament. These date from 1841 and 1842 respectively, and reveal that Haydon himself was also experimenting with fresco at this stage:

August 27 1841. The Fresco is nearly dry - has got whiter, bright, and more unearthly ... Dyce called with the air of a Master of the School of Design, and saw and felt nothing of the Poetry, but pointed out the colour of the lips, and said it would not stand, and said that I had too much impasto, and the colours ought to be stained drawing, hatched, glazed & thin. He said it was like Michel Angelo’s style of Fresco, & not Raffael’s, & he was a bungler with his tools. I replied to be like him was at least something in a first attempt.<sup>91</sup>

Jan 6th 1842. Called on Dyce, who is very amiable, and had a valuable conversation. He said the Early Frescoes were stained drawings leaving the ground for the lights.[footnote here reads: “Not true. B.R.H.”] After Giorgione the impasto of oil was copied in Fresco & that began the modern system of Raffael. Masaccio and Pinturricchio stained.<sup>92</sup>

<sup>88</sup>Francina Irwin connected Dyce’s interest in painting in fresco with that evidenced by Jeramiah Bell and David Scott at around the same, with the inference that there may have been some dialogue between them as to techniques, processes, materials and design. Irwin, 1975, p. 253.

<sup>89</sup>William Dyce and Charles Heath Wilson, *Letter to Lord Meadowbank and the Committee of the Honourable Board of Trustees for the Encouragement of Arts and Manufactures, on the best means of ameliorating the arts and manufactures of Scotland in point of taste* (Edinburgh, 1837) pp. 42-43.

<sup>90</sup>In a letter written from Rome and dated 29th June 1838, Wiseman discussed the possibility of establishing a Roman Catholic Cathedral in Britain and referred to a previous conversation in which Dyce had expressed a desire to fresco the interior of such an edifice. Wiseman also determined to recommend Dyce to Pugin, presumably envisaging the artist and architect working together harmoniously in the service of religion. They were to do so, in a manner, on the Houses of Parliament decoration, but letters between Dyce and Eastlake of the latter half of the 1840s reveal that Dyce was not an admirer of Pugin’s ideas regarding decoration.

<sup>91</sup>Willard Bissell Pope, ed., *The Diary of Benjamin Robert Haydon, vol. 5: 1840-46* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1963) pp. 85-86.

<sup>92</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 117. This terminology reveals much about Dyce’s understanding of fresco, and his

By 1841-2 Dyce may well have been at work on his earliest known commissioned fresco, that depicting *The Consecration of Archbishop Parker* at Lambeth Palace (now destroyed), and thus the two artists were presumably sharing their experiences.<sup>93</sup> It was from this design that Dyce rapidly copied two heads as a ‘portable’ fresco to exhibit as part of the third Westminster competition, now part of the Dyce holdings at the National Gallery of Scotland (Fig. 174).<sup>94</sup>

Notwithstanding Dyce’s expertise (relative to other British artists) in fresco painting, actively to seek out his involvement in the Houses of Parliament decoration, as Eastlake did, was tacitly to demonstrate a receptivity to the archaising style, with elements of influence from both early Italian and modern German art, for which Dyce had despaired of attracting patronage. What, of course, was further to Dyce’s advantage in this context was the strong popularity of the Gothic Revival style in architecture during the first half of the nineteenth century, which was employed to full effect by Barry in his design for the new Houses of Parliament. A new receptivity to, and emphasis on, the importance of a holistic approach to interior decoration ensured that the work of artists such as Dyce, Ford Madox Brown and John Rogers Herbert was viewed particularly positively in this specific scheme.

It is worth noting at this juncture that - despite the reservations attributed to him by Madox Brown - Dyce continued to execute and exhibit works in what was perceived by his contemporaries to be a ‘pre-raffaellite’ manner throughout the 1830s and early 1840s. A work that explicitly laid claim to this heritage was the now lost *Design for the Facade of a Chapel, in the style practised by the scholars of Giotto, in Upper Italy, intended to illustrate the Polychromatic decoration of the end of the 14th century*, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1839 alongside a painting which, again although now lost, can be understood by its subject-matter and style (as attested to by critics) as anticipating his first fresco in the House of Lords. This was the *St. Dunstan separating Edwy and Elgiva*, and Dyce’s son mobilised a lengthy account of it given by the *Art Journal* in his memoir as evidence that his father was “...the real originator of the Pre-Raphaelite movement in England.”<sup>95</sup> This cul-

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*Lamentation*, though an oil painting, further manifests his interest in this issue of technique, being painted very thinly over a white ground.

<sup>93</sup>It is perhaps not a coincidence that Benjamin Hawes, the member of the Commons who instigated the 1841 Select Committee concerning the decoration of the new palace, was MP for Lambeth.

<sup>94</sup>The use of the word “portable” by the commissioners of the fine arts in their call for competition entries again invokes the language of Blake thirty years previously.

<sup>95</sup>Stirling Dyce’s text bears repeating in this context: “There is a criticism [of the *St. Dunstan*] in the *Art Journal* of that year well worthy of repetition, in view of the almost consistent way in which Dyce’s name has been ignored as the real originator of the Pre-Raphaelite movement in England. Whether that movement was a good or a bad one, whether it produced good results or evil results is another matter; but, as much as had been said in praise of the brotherhood founded in 1848 and

minated in Dyce's much-lauded painting *Joash Shooting the Arrow of Deliverance*, exhibited the same year in which he participated in the Westminster competitions and which won him his associateship of the Royal Academy.<sup>96</sup> The asceticism of this painting - its flatness, emphasis on line and lack of illusionism (or "fierceness", as William Thackeray positively termed it) - appealed to a critical audience newly sensible to the need for historical accuracy in the depiction of sacred subjects.<sup>97</sup> Moreover, Dyce's submission to the fresco competition of 1844 was implicitly identified with early *buon fresco* with regards to colour by critics who remarked upon its extremely limited range of colour; despite its being "produced in almost entirely one brown colour", the writer of a piece on the fine arts in *The Gentleman's Magazine* described it as "yet one of the most expressive and effective pictures in the exhibition."<sup>98</sup> As Madox Brown remembered, with no small degree of irony, "those who knew what Art was held their peace. Babblers pronounced it quaint - it was a copy of some old work - it was papistical - it was German - it was that most abhorrent thing, Christian Art. How could a bishop have it in his palace?"<sup>99</sup> A study for the fresco surviving in the V&A reveals a simple, hieratic composition with an emphasis on clarity of line (Fig. 175).

When one considers the above evidence in conjunction with the words attributed to Dyce by Haydon in relation to fresco, it is fitting that scholars have identified the influence of Masaccio in particular in Dyce's design for the fresco which would have the distinction of being the first painted in the new Palace of Westminster. Dyce's shivering and vulnerable King Ethelbert (Fig. 176) is a synthesis of the almost-naked figures in Masaccio's fresco *The Baptism of the Neophytes* in the Brancacci chapel (Fig. 177) which, as Ethelbert was the first English King to convert to Christianity, makes for an extremely arresting visual reference.<sup>100</sup> The

of those painters who founded it, one should not lose sight of the fact that the ideas which induced them to do so and which they exhibited in their painting were not entirely the outcome of their own minds but of a gradual influence that they had imbibed from the pictures of Dyce. Whether their pictures were superior in technical skill in originality of thought or in artistic conception is a matter which does not affect the argument. The criticism runs thus:- 'This picture, at the first glance, seems crude, and hard, and uninviting; it had something in it, however, which tempted us to look again and inspect it more closely. It is certainly the production of a man of deep and matured knowledge of Art; one who, perhaps, too much scorns the modern notions of refinement. He is Gothic in his style, and has evidently taken for his models the sterner of the old masters.' DP, IX, pp. 338-339.

<sup>96</sup>The *Art Journal* (1864) called it "perhaps his finest historical work in oils" and William Sandby, in his account of the Royal Academy, described it as "so pure in style, so original in design, and so effective in treatment, that it at once established [Dyce's] reputation." William Sandby, *The History of the Royal Academy of Arts*, vol. 2 (London, 1862) p. 185.

<sup>97</sup>William Makepeace Thackeray, *Miscellanies*, vol. 5 (New York: Harper, 1877) p. 228. Dyce was congratulated particularly by the *Art Union* for his "research after authorities for costume; without which an artist can never accomplish truth", for example. Quoted in Pointon, 1979, p. 72.

<sup>98</sup>Sylvanus Urban, *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 22 (August 1844) p. 184.

<sup>99</sup>Hueffer, 1896, p. 37.

<sup>100</sup>The relationship between Dyce's figures and those of Masaccio was pointed out by Francina

immediacy of the reference derives from Dyce's six-month tour of Italy in the winter of 1845-6, made explicitly to study frescoes in preparation for his executing the *Baptism of King Ethelbert*. Despite his much greater familiarity with fresco in relation to his contemporaries, Dyce was aware of his limitations in its practice deriving from the lack of opportunity for painting such works, writing to Eastlake in July 1845:

My own wish would be (if I am to paint the fresco) to get all the preparatory steps taken and the painting at least begun before the fall of the year, and to go abroad during the winter to see the frescoes of the old Masters and pick up information on many points of practice in which I find myself deficient.<sup>101</sup>

Dyce's preferred timetable was not to be, however. He received the official commission to execute *The Baptism of Ethelbert* in August 1845 but did not begin painting it until mid-June 1846.<sup>102</sup> Much of the interim period was spent in Italy. Dyce kept a journal during this tour which is notable - though perhaps predictable, given the context - for its detailed technical investigation of the process of fresco painting. The notes made by Dyce formed the basis of a paper he later submitted to the Royal Commission and which augmented the prior investigations of Charles Heath Wilson and Charles Eastlake.<sup>103</sup> Dyce's notes, as transcribed by

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Irwin (Irwin, 1975, p. 268). The nude figure on the far right of Masaccio's composition elicited the following praise from Vasari: "In the scene showing Saint Peter performing baptisms, a very fine nude figure, shown shivering amongst those being baptised, numb with cold, is executed with the most beautiful relief and the sweetest style. This is a figure which both older and modern artisans have always held in the greatest reverence and admiration." Vasari, trans. by Bondanella and Bondanella, 1991, p. 107. Marcia Pointon made the alternative suggestion that Dyce derived the compositional relationship between the three figures in the foreground - presumably Ethelbert, Queen Bertha and one of the priests - from Mantegna's fresco from the Ovetari Chapel in the Eremitani Church in Padua of the *Baptism of Hermogenes* (now destroyed) (Fig. 179 and Fig. 178).

<sup>101</sup>DP, XX, p. 805. As has already been stressed, though, Dyce was in a much more enviable position than almost any other artist engaged at any level with the Westminster decoration project. The endemic lack of technical knowledge regarding the process of fresco painting amongst British artists was noted by the Royal Commission and practical steps taken to alleviate it; old and new examples were acquired to serve as models, such as the group of *Hercules and Amphole* painted by Anton von Gegenbauer in 1830, detached from a wall in Rome and put on display at Gwydir House for the benefit of artists in the 1840s, and the entire fresco cycle by Lattanzio Gambara shown at the Manchester Exhibition in 1857. Both examples are referenced in Delia Millar, 'European Paintings Acquired by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert & their Travels', in Carol Richardson and Graham Smith, eds., *Britannia, Italia, Germania: Taste and Travel in the Nineteenth Century* (Edinburgh: VARIE, 2001) pp. 44-75; and, as both were bought by Prince Albert, in Susanna Avery-Quash, 'Incessant personal exertions and comprehensive personal knowledge': Prince Albert's interest in early Italian art' in Avery-Quash, ed., 2012, pp. 1-22.

<sup>102</sup>A series of letters transcribed by Stirling Dyce detail the development of the commission between April 1846 and June of that year in relation to the preparation of the wall on which Dyce was to paint. Dyce then informed Eastlake in a letter dated 18th June that he had begun the fresco (DP, XXII, pp. 880-887).

<sup>103</sup>Charles Heath Wilson (1809-1882) was the son of Andrew Wilson, the landscape artist and picture agent particularly associated with Genoa in the first half of the nineteenth century. He was

his son, also offer an insight into Dyce's appreciation for early Italian art, and this chapter will conclude by analysing them through that lens and offering further parallels between the frescoes studied by Dyce in Italy and that he created immediately upon his return to England. Such an account is particularly important, this chapter ventures, as Dyce's *Baptism of King Ethelbert* has frequently been marginalised in investigations of Dyce's engagement with fresco painting in favour of his later and more extensive commission for the Queen's Robing Room. This constituted a six-painting fresco cycle which took as its source Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*, the fifteenth-century epic which recreated the chivalric world of medieval England and later provided a rich vein of source material for the Pre-Raphaelites.<sup>104</sup> The much greater remit for a multiplicity of analyses that this programme affords is reflected in the scholarship devoted to this subject.<sup>105</sup> The following account thus foregrounds Dyce's first fresco in the New Palace of Westminster in an attempt to redress this balance.

## Dyce's Notes on Frescoes in Italy.

In 1840, Dyce wrote an important letter to his acquaintance and fellow Tractarian James Robert Hope-Scott in advance of the latter's tour of the Continent. In this letter, he gave Hope-Scott a detailed summary of artists and artworks he recommended as warranting attention, despite their being the painters that "people never look at."<sup>106</sup> This list - which presumably reflects what Dyce himself had looked

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also Dyce's collaborator on *A Letter to Lord Meadowbank* and Dyce's recent successor as head of the government School of Design in London. Wilson toured Italy and Germany at the behest of the commission in 1843 to "report on the state of middle-age frescoes and other mural pictures". Wilson's report was published in the *Second Report of the Commissioners on the Fine Arts*, 22nd November 1843 (pp. 15-44) alongside two papers by Eastlake on, respectively, dampness and fresco (pp. 45-55) and the styles and methods of painting most appropriate to the decoration of public buildings (pp. 56-65).

<sup>104</sup>Understandably, interdisciplinary research on topics such as the dissemination of the Arthurian legend and the revival of medievalism in the nineteenth century, such as Debra Mancoff, *The Arthurian Revival in Victorian Art* (London and New York: Garland, 1990), have privileged Dyce's fresco series over the individual example. Even the predominantly art-historical accounts of Dyce's life and the Westminster decoration project, though, are characterised by a more superficial treatment of the *Baptism of Ethelbert* in relation to the Arthurian frescoes; Pointon, for example, dedicates a chapter to the latter ('The Leader of the Frescanti', pp. 110-127) and two pages to the former.

<sup>105</sup>Another attraction of this work may be the dramatic finale it provides to the narrative of Dyce's life, as the artist collapsed on the scaffold in the executing of the fifth fresco and died leaving the cycle incomplete.

<sup>106</sup>Letter from Dyce to Hope-Scott dated 17 September 1840, NLS MS. 3669. With the same letter Dyce also gave Hope-Scott an introduction to the Nazarene painter Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld in Munich and informed him that he had arranged for Overbeck to show him art in Rome. Hope-Scott and Dyce also had their close friendships with Gladstone in common during this period, although Hope-Scott's conversion to Catholicism in 1851 spelt the end of his acquaintance with the statesman.

at previously in Italy, with human and literary guides - heavily featured Trecento and Quattrocento artists; Dyce included Pinturicchio, Masaccio, Giotto, Botticelli, Ghirlandaio, Cima de Congeliano, Fra Angelico, Lorenzo di Credi, Fra Filippo Lippi, Giovanni Bellini, Cosimo Rosselli and (perhaps the most obscure) Lippo Dalmasio. Many of the same names feature in the notes Dyce made whilst touring Italy following his commission in August 1845 to execute the first fresco in the New Palace of Westminster, cementing our knowledge of Dyce's pre-existing familiarity with the great fresco painters of those centuries. Moreover, the occurrence of these names in Dyce's notes is often related to expressions of Dyce's own aesthetic preferences; as Lindsay Errington observed, although Dyce's primary objective was to assess varying frescoes "it is impossible to appraise works of art in this way without taste and preference creeping in."<sup>107</sup>

An interesting comparison can be made at this point with the report on fresco painting appended to the Fine Art Commission's second report (dated 22nd November 1843) authored by Charles Heath Wilson. Wilson's report is far more extensive than that of Dyce, and ranges more widely in terms of the early art it references; Giotto and Mantegna in Padua are mentioned, as are the frescoes of Assisi, in addition to those in the Sistine chapel and the Campo Santo at Pisa (which Dyce also discussed). However, it is apparent that Wilson approached his tour with an orthodox view of artistic merit, evidenced by both his comment that Raphael was "the most perfect of fresco-painters" and the fact that the notes on individual frescoes and cycles which finish his report were all by artists active in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>108</sup> Dyce, as will be demonstrated, focused predominantly on Christian, 'Purist', artworks and evinced the most admiration for the artists of the Quattrocento. Furthermore, Dyce did not shy away from publicly expressing his strong aesthetic appreciation of such art both visually - in terms of his emulation of some of the stylistic qualities of early Italian art - and textually, and the judgements in the notes on fresco are consonant with both his earlier and later public writings. Dyce was surely the author of the paragraph in the letter to Lord Meadowbank of 1837 that extolled the "revival styles" - i.e. those of the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries - as especially being "of great beauty, and worthy of study and imitation", and in his report on the National Gallery of 1853 he wrote of his opinion that the paintings of that revival era exhibited a "freshness of thought and intention, a vivacity, a gaiety, a vividness of impression, an innocence, simplicity, and truthfulness ... which technical imperfection tended even to develop in greater

<sup>107</sup>Errington, 1992, p. 492.

<sup>108</sup>*Second Report of the Commissioners on the Fine Arts*, 22nd November 1843, p. 31 and pp. 34-40 respectively. Wilson also often prefaced his remarks on the frescoes by Tintoretto and other more established masters in the then still prevalent canon of taste with the appellation 'important'.

force, than the more universal aims of later art permitted.”<sup>109</sup>

Stirling Dyce noted that his father left for Italy at the end of September and spent six months there.<sup>110</sup> The cities featured in the notes are, in sequence, Pisa, Florence, Rome, Siena, Florence, Bologna, Piacenza and Milan. Although there is an intriguing temporal gap - between late October and mid January - in the dates transcribed by Stirling Dyce, a letter to Eastlake appears to intimate that Dyce was in Rome throughout this period.<sup>111</sup> Venice appears not to have been visited, which seems an interesting choice; it could be argued that Venice, of all Italian cities, had the climate most approximating that of London, the location for the intended British frescoes.<sup>112</sup> However, the Venetian climate - particularly the dampness resulting from the city's being built on water - meant that the major wall and decorative paintings were executed in oil and thus there were very few frescoes to see there.<sup>113</sup> Perhaps this should have been taken as a salient example by the commissioners on the fine arts whose deliberations did, after all, concern another maritime city.

Dyce's notes begin on October 2nd 1845 at the Campo Santo in Pisa, and

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<sup>109</sup>Dyce and Wilson, 1837, p. 36; Dyce, 1853, p. 12. Dyce himself pointed out the rarity of familiarity with early Italian art not just in Britain but “in any country” in the latter of these two publications. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>110</sup>A later letter from Dyce to Eastlake offers a particularly valuable insight into both Dyce's choice of itinerary and his methodology: “I kept on purpose out of the way of the more powerful works at Munich, that I might not be diverted from the path which I had chalked out for myself, and which is not that of the Germans.” Letter from Dyce to Eastlake dated 23rd March 1846. DP, XXII, p. 878.

<sup>111</sup>Dyce wrote to Eastlake from Rome on February 17th 1846 to explain the longevity of his absence from England: “I have been here [Rome] for a considerable time ... My stay in Rome has been prolonged beyond the time I had fixed ...”. DP, XXII, p. 815. Presumably the gap in Dyce's notes was caused by a lost notebook, although Stirling Dyce did not record this.

<sup>112</sup>Dyce is documented in Venice in 1832 thanks to a watercolour (now in the National Galleries of Scotland) made by him of his friend, fellow Scotsman, artist and experimenter in fresco, David Scott. According to a letter written by Scott to his father, the two artists met first in Paris in September and then again in Venice on the 26th October, from which city they travelled to Mantua together in November. William Bell Scott, *Memoir of David Scott, R.S.A.* (Edinburgh, 1850) pp. 72-78. *La Gazzetta Privilegiata di Venezia*, 247 (27th Ottobre 1832) has Dyce's name in the ‘arrivi e partenze del giorno 25 ottobre’, and records him as arriving from Turin. No. 255 of the same newspaper, dated 7th November 1832, contradicts Scott's information (but this may of course be a misprint), listing under the departures for November 6th: “Scott, gentil. inglese, per Mantova - Dyce, *idem*, per Milano.”

<sup>113</sup>For example, Titian's frescoes for the Fondaca dei Tedeschi, made especially famous through the narrative of competition and usurpation between Titian and Giorgione espoused by Pietro Dolce and Carlo Ridolfi, fell foul of the dampness of the city's air. Carlo Ridolfi, *The Life of Titian*, trans. Julia Conaway Bondanella and Peter Bondanella (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996) pp. 61-62. See Harold Wethey, *The Paintings of Titian: Complete Edition*, vol. 3 (London: Phaidon, 1975) p. 5 for a brief discussion of the deleterious effect of the Venetian climate on fresco. There were plenty of frescoes to be seen in the surrounding cities of the Veneto, though, not least the Arena chapel frescoes and those by Mantegna in the Eremitani church in Padua which had already been publicised by Dyce's friends the Callcotts.

he spent approximately twelve days examining the frescoes here.<sup>114</sup> Although there is minimal information regarding the cities, sites and artworks that Dyce had a pre-existing familiarity with through his earlier tours in Italy, he would certainly have been aware of the existence of the Campo Santo through a multiplicity of second-hand visual and textual accounts if not from first-hand experience.<sup>115</sup> As Robyn Cooper noted, “interest [in the monument] reached a popular level in London in 1832 when a diorama of ‘the singular and celebrated Campo Santo at Pisa’ was exhibited at Regent’s Park.”<sup>116</sup> Dyce’s notes evince none of the historical or literary associations sparked by the frescoes for other travellers in the first half of the nineteenth century. Rather, Dyce’s main preoccupation was the frescoes’ materiality, and his value judgements were underpinned by his assessments of the materials and techniques used. Thus his notes commence with the judgement that the frescoes then attributed, on the authority of Vasari, to Orcagna - the *Last Judgement*, *Triumph of Death* and *Inferno* - were “on the whole ... the best preserved of any” and that according to the Custode - Giovanni Rosini? - this was because they were painted “on lathing, on reeds.”<sup>117</sup> The next two paragraphs detail Dyce’s preoccupation with finding an explanation for the “pink colour which seems to cover more or less nearly all the frescoes of Gozzoli.”<sup>118</sup> Dyce related these “reddened frescoes” to a preference of the time at which Gozzoli was active for “a pink ground in architecture, middle ground of landscapes, and in light clouds”, and his sustained study of the Gozzoli frescoes convinced him that the pinkness was created deliberately by the artist in his make-up of the mortar underlying the frescoes, rather than a consequence of the effects of time with respect to the chemical make-up of the colours, and that it was comparable in colour to that seen in the “Manuscript illuminations of the Quattro centisti.”<sup>119</sup>

Although Dyce did make brief references to the frescoes in the Campo Santo attributed to Giotto, Simone Martini, Orcagna and Spinello Spinelli, his attention was primarily focused on those by Gozzoli. This cycle was traditionally the most esteemed by writers and tourists in reference to the Campo Santo in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, predominantly because they, in the temporal framework

<sup>114</sup>Two very important essays on the changing responses of English and other visitors to the Campo Santo are Cooper, 1982, pp. 72-100 and Gatti, 1986, pp. 239-270.

<sup>115</sup>Francina Irwin stated (giving no evidence) that Dyce took the Palgrave edition of Murray’s *Handbook for Travellers in North Italy* of 1842 with him. Irwin’s comment that this was “the first guidebook to direct serious public attention to Italian art before Raphael” seems somewhat spurious in this context, given Dyce’s profession and pre-existing interest in such works. Irwin, 1975, p. 256.

<sup>116</sup>Cooper, 1986, p. 239.

<sup>117</sup>DP, XXI, p. 822. Giovanni Rosini, Professor of Italian Literature at the University of Pisa, was conservator of the Campo Santo after Lasinio’s death in 1838.

<sup>118</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>119</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 822-824.



manifested in the decoration of the monument, were the latest and thus most closely approximated the perfection of Raphael.<sup>120</sup> For Dyce, however, the focus on Gozzoli's frescoes can likely be explained by recourse to their condition at the time - Mariana Starke called them "the best preserved of any in the Campo Santo" - and the extensiveness of the cycle relative to other works there, which afforded opportunity for concerted study of the artist's procedure and techniques over a series of compositions.<sup>121</sup> Gozzoli's twenty-three frescoes of Old Testament subjects (in a greatly ruined state now thanks to bomb damage during the second world war) were on the north wall of the Campo Santo, making them accessible for close study (although Dyce did note having to "stand on a Sarcophagus to reach the hand of a figure" in one).<sup>122</sup> Based on the empirical evidence, Dyce concluded that Gozzoli "prepared no large cartoon of the whole picture but made from his small design, an enlarged sketch in terra rossa on the mortar, which served to shew the effect of his composition and to guide him with the execution of the details."<sup>123</sup> The subsequent observation that Gozzoli must therefore have executed much of the secondary parts of his composition "extempore" is underlined, though whether in approbation or censure is unclear. Dyce then noted that perspective and leading lines visible in the frescoes demonstrated that Gozzoli's execution of the architectural components in his frescoes was much more conscientious.

The remainder of Dyce's observations on the Campo Santo frescoes consist of an extended discussion of the merits of using ultramarine - which Dyce found to "always [show] itself by its unpleasant and crude vividness" if ever used in a darker tint than the blue of the sky - and carbonate of copper.<sup>124</sup> Examination of the use of colour engendered discussion of medium, which in turn led to Dyce's first conclusion regarding the relative merits of buon fresco and tempera. Carbonate of copper, thought Dyce, seemed to always have been applied in tempera, whereas ultramarine generally was used *a buon fresco*. By the time Dyce reached Florence and examined Gozzoli's frescoes in the chapel of the Riccardi Palace on October 14th, he was prepared to reassess his earlier thoughts regarding Gozzoli's use of media:

I am inclined to think that [the] greater part of what I supposed to have been fresco in [Gozzoli's] other works is really tempora[sic]. At all events

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<sup>120</sup>As Robyn Cooper pointed out, Rosini declared Gozzoli to have been "il Raffaello degli antichi" (this despite the fact that Gozzoli executed the Campo Santo frescoes in the 1460s, a mere twenty years prior to Raphael's early works) and speculated that the latter artist may have visited the Campo Santo to study Gozzoli's work. Cooper, 1986, p. 83.

<sup>121</sup>Starke, vol. I, 1800, p. 214.

<sup>122</sup>DP, XXI, p. 823.

<sup>123</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>124</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 825.

whatever amount of his labour was in fresco nearly his whole pictures are worked over in dis-temper. My impression to-day was that the heads and hands were nearly finished in fresco, but that the draperies and back-grounds were only sketched, being finished in tempera; in short that fresco as so far as it was employed, was used because it was more convenient than tempera in many respects; but not from any notion of its being superior to tempera: hence the very few joinings of the plaster.<sup>125</sup>

This interesting comment regarding the relative status of fresco and distemper contradicted the official institutional opinion regarding the superiority of buon fresco over fresco secco. Dyce was evidently aware of this as, although he repeated this opinion in both a private letter to Eastlake and his official report to the commission, he took pains to stress that he would not deviate from the prescribed course of buon fresco, with all its associations of monumentality, skill and manliness.<sup>126</sup>

The theme of preservation constantly pervades Dyce's assessments of frescoes in the multiple Italian cities he visited. Much of his investigative efforts were focused on determining which frescoes and parts of frescoes were painted in true fresco and which in secco, and what could be extrapolated from his findings as to the best procedures for executing the planned works in London. A concomitant strand of inquiry into the Italian masters' use of materials was the effects of extraneous substances on them over time. In Rome Dyce puzzled over the damage apparent in Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel ceiling frescoes versus the much better condition of those by earlier painters on the chapel's walls: "People say that the smoke of candles and incense has done the damage: but if this be the case, why has the smoke passed by the frescoes of the Quattrocentisti."<sup>127</sup> His conclusion would have been far too radical a subversion of taste for many: "The truth is that these old artists though inferior designers were more skilful painters than Michael Angelo[sic]. And this the durability of their work proves."<sup>128</sup> Earlier in the same city he had expressed his belief that smoke was, along with dampness, "one of the great destructives of pic-

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<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.* p. 829.

<sup>126</sup> "You will be surprised when I tell you that, notwithstanding the fuss which has been made about retouching in distemper and its injurious effects, the best present frescoes are those in which tempera has been most largely employed. I do not mean to adopt the practice; but still the fact is unquestionable that the best and best preserved frescoes here are more or less not merely retouched but executed in tempera. There are for instance no frescoes so well preserved as Domenichinos; but they are all hatched over in distemper - to Pinturichios, more than half of whose works are executed in distemper - and there are brilliant clear and luminous while those of the anti-tempera school Vasari, Salviati Michael Angelo[sic] and the rest have become chalky white-washed looking things." Dyce to Eastlake, February 17th 1846. DP, XXI, p. 816. See Chapter 8 for an extended discussion of the many positive attributes accorded buon fresco in academic theory and public opinion.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 837.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, p.838.

tures in frescoes”, to which he added the following note of warning: “If this be true our proposed works in London have a bad chance of durability.”<sup>129</sup>

A substantial portion of Dyce’s Roman notes are devoted to the frescoes decorating the various public and private spaces of the Vatican, as might be expected. Both there and elsewhere, though, he did not constrain himself to just works of thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; this despite the fact that he termed this the era (in an introductory lecture of 1844 in his capacity as Professor of the Theory of Fine Arts at King’s College London) the ‘ascetic’ period and glorified it as that “during which Christian art reached its highest point of excellence”, suggesting that the art which followed that of the end of the fifteenth century progressively deteriorated due to a lack of proper Christian feeling.<sup>130</sup> Thus in a discussion of method stemming from his earlier extensive examination of frescoes by Benozzo Gozzoli, Dyce accordingly esteemed Raphael’s earlier works more highly than his later ones:

With respect to the execution of Raffaele’s frescoes, I find the remark I have made on Gozzoli’s method to be applicable. When he could not do otherwise stippling and hatching are resorted to. His first works however contain more hatching and finishing in distemper than his later, but I doubt very much whether on the whole his later works are so good in execution as his early ones; they are more masterly, but less careful and beautiful in detail, and certainly less beautiful in colour.<sup>131</sup>

Concomitantly, as Lindsay Errington has already pointed out, throughout the notes Dyce’s “classification of frescoists into those he disliked and those he admired was consistent with the opinions stated into his lecture”, and thus the frescoes of those ‘sensualists’ Annibale Carracci and Guido Reni are found by Dyce, as expected, to “want merit”.<sup>132</sup> Notably, works by Carracci which Dyce returned to see at “Sola’s the Sculptor” on January 31st 1846 are described as being “the sort of frescoes which Haydon would admire”; Dyce described them as using too much lime and being “extremely coarse and harsh in execution and in some respects in effect”, echoing his earlier comments about Michelangelo’s frescoes and thus conceptually linking the two Italian artists and the painterly effect for which Haydon strived in his frescoes.<sup>133</sup> Disapproval of the sensual also underpins his references to other seventeenth-century artists such as Zuccherò and D’Arpino. The exceptions to this

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<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 830.

<sup>130</sup> William Dyce, *Theory of the Fine Arts, An Introductory Lecture* (London, 1844) pp. 18-19.

<sup>131</sup> DP, XXI, p. 831.

<sup>132</sup> Errington, 1992, p. 492.

<sup>133</sup> DP, XXI, p. 835.

rule, however, were Filippino Lippi and Domenichino. Of the former's work in Santa Maria Sopra Minerva, Dyce was largely negative:

[The frescoes] seem to be careless, off hand productions, executed with facility but ill-arranged and ineffective on the whole. He had however the merit of demerit, at least the boldness to discard many conventionalities of his time e.g. in the arrangement of draperies, symmetry of composition etc., and this gives a look of originality to his works.<sup>134</sup>

Domenichino, by contrast, provoked strong praise from Dyce for the "clearness, likeness, depth and transparency, and an absence of brick-dust colour in the flesh which is extraordinary".<sup>135</sup> The latter observation prompted a footnote constituting a list of superlative flesh painters - "Gozzoli, Ghirlandajo, Perugino, Pinturicchio, Lib. del Piombo (Farnesina) Raffaello (Sometimes for he is very unequal, possibly from the circumstance of his having trusted too much to his scholars) and Domenichino" - and an addendum to this list is revealing as to Dyce's appreciation for the seventeenth-century artist: "In the works of the last we find much of the beautiful brownish tone of the earlier painters."<sup>136</sup> Another attraction of Domenichino's frescoes was their high state of preservation; Dyce termed them "the best preserved works of fresco to be found in Rome."<sup>137</sup> Dyce went as far as to work up a watercolour copy of a figure from a Domenichino fresco, the Demoniac boy at Grotta Ferrata also at Sola's, and presumably for sale (Fig. 180).<sup>138</sup>

As the above extracts and the earlier reference to ultramarine illustrate, the other dominant *lietmotif* of Dyce's notes on fresco is colour.<sup>139</sup> In this area Pinturicchio reigned supreme, and Dyce's comments on his merits make recourse to the immutable foundation on which his aesthetic judgements were made - Christianity:

I do not think in general that the merits of Pinturicchio are sufficiently appreciated. Of the older masters he is certainly on the whole the greatest and most uniformly good colourist in fresco ... Of course I presuppose that he was what is termed a Purist, a church painter and that he is to be judged of as such.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 834-835.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 832.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>138</sup> Marcia Pointon identified a watercolour copy of Taddeo Gaddi's Bardi Chapel fresco of *The Entombment* in Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery as dating from this tour of Italy, as also presumably do two other watercolour copies, now lost, after Pinturicchio and Ghirlandajo listed in the Dyce sale catalogue of May 1865 (lot no. 9).

<sup>139</sup> Dyce was appointed Master of the School of Colour at the Trustees Academy in Edinburgh in the mid 1830s, though as has been detailed earlier in this chapter, Dyce was most often lauded for the correctness of his drawing; the Redgraves indeed disparaged Dyce's abilities as a great colourist.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 840.

Dyce presumably did not know of Pinturicchio's ceiling frescoes in the Palazzo dei Penitenzieri in Rome of c. 1490, commissioned by Cardinal Domenico della Rovere and one of the earliest instances of profane decoration in a cardinal's residence.<sup>141</sup> This section of the notes continues with further elaboration of the appealing aspects of Pinturicchio's fresco style and technique, one of which was his "truth of local colour". Dyce's attempt at an explanation for this achievement is by far the most frequently-quoted passage from these notes, having as it does particular significance for both contemporary German and future Pre-Raphaelite practice:

I suspect that we modern painters do not study nature enough in the open air, or in broad daylight, or we should be better able to understand how the old painters obtained truth by such apparently anomylous[sic] means ... The Germans such as Cornelius attempt to follow the old painters in their method of darkening rather than shadowing; but without success, simply because they learn the method from old art rather than from nature ... Of this I am quite convinced that no degree of study in the painting room with a small confined light will ever enable one to make any approach to the kind of open daylight reality obtained by the early painters.<sup>142</sup>

Pinturicchio again impressed Dyce when the latter visited Siena at the end of February 1846: "Pinturicchio's work in the library of the Cathedral is a most magnificent piece of decorative art which in mere brilliancy and harmony of effect exceeds any other production I am acquainted with."<sup>143</sup> Siena also provided the locus for Dyce to ruminate on decorative art, a long-standing interest of his: "by the way I do not know any place except Assisi where the Italian Gothic painted decoration of the Trecento may be seen in such perfection or in such quantity as in Siena."<sup>144</sup>

The latter weeks of Dyce's tour seem to have been somewhat disappointing. On 27th February 1846 he wrote rather despondently that he had, that day "seen nearly all which Bologna possesses in the shape of Fresco; and I do not think the sight is worth the trouble of seeing it."<sup>145</sup> Moving on to Milan, Luini's frescoes were not as impressive as he had hoped, and the very last portion of his notes are

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<sup>141</sup>Pietro Scarpellini, 'Pinturicchio, Bernardino.' *Grove Art Online*, Oxford Art Online, Oxford University Press, accessed April 21, 2013, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T067759>. Although the commission from della Rovere appears in his life of Pinturicchio, Vasari gives no details as to the subject matter of the frescoes.

<sup>142</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 840-841.

<sup>143</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 849.

<sup>144</sup>This comment again is useful for its spotlighting of Dyce's pre-existing knowledge of early Italian art, but begs the question - why did he not visit Assisi during this trip? One possibility is that he may have done during the period represented during the lacuna in his notes

<sup>145</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 862.

concerned with panel painting rather than fresco. However, within the final pages of Dyce's notes are two notable overall conclusions that bear repeating. The first relates to his investigation into colouring methods, and can, it will shortly be argued, be mapped on to his subsequent work in fresco:

The more I see of ancient and modern frescoes, the more I am convinced of the mistake of making all or nearly all draperies of the same depth of colour as a Michael Angelo[sic] and Coreggio[sic] and other followers. It does not produce the breadth intended, but instead a certain opaque flatness which is disagreeable and ineffective.<sup>146</sup>

Another is a more general, and very logical, verdict regarding execution, which Dyce expressed in the following simple terms: "The more the care with which a fresco is finished the better seem to be its chances of durability."<sup>147</sup>

Almost immediately upon his return Dyce put the notes he had made in Italy at the disposal of Charles Eastlake, who wrote to Dyce on March 21st that he thought the notes "the more interesting as they contain different conclusions accordingly as [Dyce's] observation was more extensive or more accurate."<sup>148</sup> He then asked Dyce to compile a report for the benefit of the Commission, to which Dyce agreed. His acquiescence came with the pre-emptive caveat that his notes overlapped with the reports already given by Charles Heath Wilson and Eastlake due to his not taking those with him to Italy:

I thought it would be better to write down what occurred to me without reference to the remarks which had been made by others - so that I find on looking over the printed papers that I have gone over ground already explored. I could, however, add a good many observations of a less technical kind.<sup>149</sup>

The subsequent report, requested by the Commissioners and appended to their Sixth Report of August 1846, was "devoured" by Eastlake, who found it a "very valuable contribution."<sup>150</sup>

What Dyce meant by "observations of a less technical kind" is unclear, however. Judgements of taste and expressions of Dyce's own aesthetic preferences are almost entirely expunged from the official report, which comprises a distillation of his technical observations on medium, pigments, damp and smoke. He synthesised

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<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 869.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 863.

<sup>148</sup> DP, XXII, p. 876.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 877-878.

<sup>150</sup> Letter from Eastlake to Dyce, 31st August 1846. *Ibid.*, p. 928.

his own evidentially-based research with the theories of fresco painting as advanced by Cennini and Vasari. His report also touched on other topics such as use of stained glass in relation to fresco decoration. Dyce bemoaned the fact that “the effect of Ghirlandajo’s frescoes [in Santa Maria Novella in Florence] is completely obscured by the painted glass through which they are lighted”, opining that “all but ornamental lead work and a few streaks of colour ought to be excluded from the windows of rooms containing frescoes on the walls.”<sup>151</sup> The official report concludes with an extended discussion of the effects of smoke on the Sistine Chapel frescoes and those decorating the Piccolomini Library in Siena.

### *The Baptism of King Ethelbert.*

It took Dyce only six weeks to execute *The Baptism of King Ethelbert*, despite his originally anticipating six months. The speedy execution of the fresco was presumably expedited by favourable weather conditions, but undoubtedly the knowledge (or perhaps pressure) that both the commission and the public were awaiting the outcome of this, the first fresco to be executed, was another causal factor.<sup>152</sup> Thus Dyce’s letters to Eastlake between April (when the wall on which he was to paint began to be prepared) and July evince a deep-rooted and prophetic concern about its longevity and appearance. Particularly notable is the repeated disclaimer in letters expressing concern about, for example, the too-short period between the laying of the plaster and the commencement of painting (the reason being that to have waited longer would have been to risk the likely occurrence of the weather not being suitable for painting in *buon fresco*), and the small cracks that appeared in the plaster. It is clear that these observations were intended to serve as Dyce’s defence should, as turned out to be the case, the condition of the fresco deteriorate. Indeed, the scale of the restorations that the fresco has endured - including one by Dyce himself, as early as 1862 - is such that they inevitably impinge upon any contemporary assessment of the work, and perhaps particularly with regard to colour. However, the intense

<sup>151</sup>DP, XXI, p. 859. This judgement was endorsed by Waagen in 1854, who wrote of his concern about the inclusion of stained-glass windows in the new palace: “I am not prepared to approve it [the use of stained glass], partly because the pictures can ill afford to lose any portion of that sparing light which the cloudy skies of England at best bestow upon them, and also because the forms of the merely decorative art of glass-painting look but rude and gaudy when seen in juxtaposition with the incomparably higher character of fresco-painting. I should much prefer to see the windows filled with simple but tasteful Gothic designs, in a light tone.” Gustav Friedrich Waagen, *Treasures of Art in Great Britain*, vol. 1, trans. by Elizabeth Rigby (London, 1854) p. 428.

<sup>152</sup>The mean temperature for June 1846 was nineteen degrees Celsius (‘Meteorological Observations for June 1846’, *Philosophical Magazine, Series 3: 1832-1850* 29:192 (1850) p. 151.) The recently serialised original diary of Nathaniel Bryceson, wharf clerk of Soho and Pimlico, contains the following entry dated Wednesday 29th July 1846: “The weather the forepart of this month has been very dry and mild, but the latter week has been exceedingly warm and a rare time for the bugs.” Westminster City Archives, <http://www.westminster.gov.uk/services/libraries/archives/victorian-clerk>.

interest directed towards Dyce's work on the fresco in the latter half of the 1840s is extremely favourable in this context, generating as it did a number of first-hand critiques of the work which, when synthesised with various forms of surviving visual evidence, allow one to recreate something approximating the original effect of the fresco.

Much of the pictorial mechanics of Dyce's fresco are evidenced in a water-colour now in the Houses of Parliament collection (Fig. 181; widely believed to be that prepared by Dyce in 1845 in accordance with the Commission of the Fine Art's commission), a preparatory sketch in the V&A of the top half of the composition (Fig. 182), and the surviving fresco itself (Fig. 186).<sup>153</sup> The most arresting compositional aspect of the work is its separation into two groups, enforced to a degree by the dimensions of the long and narrow space which Dyce was allocated to work with, through the device of the spectators on a balcony looking down on the action below. Marcia Pointon identified Venetian art - mentioning particularly Carpaccio's *Arrival of the English Ambassadors* (1498) (Fig. 184) - as a source for this device, but perhaps a more pertinent compositional and ideological comparison can be made with a series of paintings of sacred, rather than secular, subject-matter; namely Paolo Veronese's feast scenes, and particularly the controversial *Feast in the House of Levi*, painting for the refectory of Venice's SS. Giovanni e Paolo in 1578 (Fig. 185).<sup>154</sup> The anachronism of the classicising, triumphal-esque round arches of Dyce's architectural framework - particularly when viewed holistically *in situ* within its pointed-arch surround (Fig. 186) - was noted by both contemporary and modern commentators.<sup>155</sup> An omission in Claire Willsdon's discussion of the designated format of the Lords' Chamber frescoes is revealing. Willsdon writes that "it was perhaps only Maclise of the artists involved who found a satisfactory solution by framing his compositions, *The Spirit of Chivalry* and *The Spirit of Justice*, with a round arch beneath the actual pointed one of their architectural surround". Nothing is said of Dyce's similar round arches; his, however, are much more elongated than those of Maclise and thus do not provide the same level of balance to the composition (Fig. 187).<sup>156</sup> One wonders if the enforced vertical composition sat uncomfortably with Dyce, whose preference was for horizontally-arranged, frieze-like compositions.<sup>157</sup> It is also worth pointing out that architectural backgrounds

<sup>153</sup> Also extant are a couple of sketches of individual figures and details of the composition.

<sup>154</sup> Pointon, 1979, p.

<sup>155</sup> *The Athenaeum*, for example, sarcastically exhorted their readers to "imagine a Saxon king of the sixth century baptised beneath Norman arches of the twelfth century". *The Athenaeum*, 927 (August 2nd 1845) p. 771.

<sup>156</sup> Willsdon, 2000, p. 52. William Vaughan associated the two-tier compositional format (also evidenced in Ford Madox Brown's unsuccessful fresco design) with German precedents.

<sup>157</sup> The frescoes executed by Dyce in the Queen's Robing Room are prime examples of this, but when one looks at Dyce's surviving narrative paintings as a corpus it is clear that paintings of a



are not, on the whole, a prominent feature in Dyce's *oeuvre*. Indeed the Ethelbert arches makes for an interesting contrast with a corresponding reredos framework designed by Dyce just three years later for his large fresco in the church of All Saints on Margaret Street (Fig. 188), which is much more evocative of a thirteenth- or fourteenth-century altarpiece.

Another element of Dyce's design which attracted censure from some quarters - in relation to both the cartoon he submitted to the Westminster competition of 1845 and the final fresco - was the figure of the scene's protagonist, King Ethelbert. The affinity between Ethelbert and the nudes of Masaccio's *Baptism of the Neophytes* has already been noted, and in their descriptions of this figure those critics inclined to view it negatively mobilised the vocabulary of style utilised in previous descriptions of early Italian art.<sup>158</sup> Thus the reviewer of *The Literary Gazette* wrote of the "distorted and Lazarus-looking king, the more unpleasant as occupying the foreground", and that of *The Spectator* believed that the King had "a mean and abject air, better suited to an act of penance than the administration of baptism."<sup>159</sup> However, Dyce's representation of King Ethelbert, the protagonist of the fresco, accorded harmoniously with what he saw as one of the greatest merits of medieval Christian painting - its realism. Whilst Richard and Samuel Redgrave criticised the "slavish and mean" depiction of Ethelbert in his "submission" to the priests, the specificity of the figure of the King, or its unidealised nature, evokes the type "more or less based on the griefs, the feebleness, the imperfections of humanity" which Dyce celebrated in his 1844 lecture *Theory of the Fine Arts* and defined in contradistinction to ancient Greek art, in which the physical ideal was privileged.<sup>160</sup> This movement, according to Dyce, engendered "a new standard of perfection in art, [which was] spiritual rather than physical."<sup>161</sup>

However, these negative comments belie the strong overall approbation gar-

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horizontal format far outweigh those of a vertical one.

<sup>158</sup>The negative currency of terms such as 'distorted' and 'mean' came into play in the critical discourse centred on Pre-Raphaelite painting; just one example is the following excerpt from a review in the *Guardian* of Hunt's *A Converted British Family Sheltering a Missionary from the Persecution of the Druids*: "... we decidedly opine that this [the reviewer's understanding of the PRB's aim to give "intensity of expression and individual character" to all their figures] might be effected without adopting the quaint distortions of figure which are rather accidents of the great Flemish painters, Van Eyck and Hemling, the masters of this school, than real elements of their art and method of treatment ...". *Guardian*, 5.226 (8 May 1850), p. 336. The descriptors used for Dyce's Ethelbert also conceptually conform to, and indeed anticipate, Elizabeth Prettejohn's assertion that the vocabulary of Pre-Raphaelite criticism was "pseudo-medical". Elizabeth Prettejohn, *The Pre-Raphaelites* (2000) p. 46.

<sup>159</sup>*The Literary Gazette and Journal of the Belles Lettres, Arts, Sciences, &c*, (London, 1845) p. 443 and *The Spectator*, No. 888 (5th July 1845) p. 664, respectively.

<sup>160</sup>Redgrave and Redgrave, 1866, p. 556 and Dyce, 1844, pp. 13-15.

<sup>161</sup>*Ibid.*

nered by the *Baptism of Ethelbert*. In the context of the cartoon competition of 1845, Dyce's watercolour design was consistently rated the most successful of all those submitted; the author of an article in the *John Bull* called it "decidedly superior to all the others" and especially mentioned that "it attracted the notice of the visitors throughout the day."<sup>162</sup> An attribute repeatedly singled out for praise was Dyce's palette, and it is clear that his empirical study, conducted in Italy, of differing fresco techniques and the varying effects that could be achieved informed his work in the House of Lords. A letter from Dyce to Eastlake attests to the former's desire to emulate the brilliancy and clarity of the colouring of Pinturicchio whom he had so admired.<sup>163</sup> This he achieved through the use of a light colour scheme, redolent of early Italian, rather than Old Master, paintings, and through the infinite variations in tone of hue of the large draperies in the golds and blues which dominate the work. *The Athenaeum* published a nuanced review of the fresco following its unveiling in August 1846, and particularly praised the colour effects:

[The colouring] leaves little to be wished for. The vividness, gradation of tone, aerial perspective and reflected lights in the fresco appear to us quite as successful as they would have been had Mr. Dyce executed the work in the more familiar medium of oil. The executive success in colour being the chief difficulty which Mr. Dyce had to resolve after having made his design, we may congratulate him on having mastered it. Glancing from the intense gilding and colour which surrounds the fresco, its tints maintain a pre-eminence on which the eye gratefully reposes. Amidst all the antagonism of surrounding gold, azure, and vermillion, lavishly used, the fresco shines forth as the most attractive spot in the room. Mr. Dyce deserves, we think, all praise for his work - and we give it ungrudgingly.<sup>164</sup>

Rosie Dias has recently explained the strongly colouristic tendency that characterised early-nineteenth-century British art as a strategy employed by artists to triumph in the notoriously over-saturated art market, encapsulated by the annual Royal Academy exhibition at which there were generally upwards of one thousand art works displayed.<sup>165</sup> In one sense, then, Dyce's fresco can be understood as par-

<sup>162</sup> *John Bull*, No. 282 (London, 7 July 1845) p. 423.

<sup>163</sup> This letter is dated July 7th 1846, and was thus written whilst Dyce was in the middle of executing the fresco. Dyce wrote of his intention to execute a large blue drapery in ultramarine, and that he hoped to counteract the "bleached appearance which is so frequent in the blues of the old frescoes" by mixing factitious ultramarine, which tended to blackening, with the genuine pigment. DP, XXI, pp. 891-2.

<sup>164</sup> *The Athenaeum*, 983 (29 August 1846) pp. 889-890.

<sup>165</sup> Rosie Dias, 'Colour, Effect and the Formation of an English School of Painting', in Peter Humfrey, ed., *The Reception of Titian in Britain* (Turnhout: Broepols, 2013).

ticipating in this kind of artistic competition; although his fresco was not competing specifically for purchase in the marketplace, it still had to jostle for attention within the heavily-decorated space of the Lord's Chamber which would ultimately contain another five fresco paintings (although it must be noted that these were required by commissarial decree to conform with that of Dyce's with regards to the "size of their principal figures, their style of colouring, and the degree of completeness in the execution of their works").<sup>166</sup> Simultaneously, however, it cannot be overestimated in this context how different Dyce's palette was from the oil paintings being executed contemporaneously by an artist and leading academician such as William Etty.<sup>167</sup>

Another review - that which described Ethelbert as "mean and abject", but found little else to criticise - also praised Dyce's use of colour, and identified the influence of early Italian art - Florentine, specifically - in the stylistic qualities of the fresco:

*The Baptism of Ethelbert*, by William Dyce, is the most lively picture and the cleverest composition of all. It is in the style of the early Florentine schools - a much better model than the modern French or German school: the refinement and simplicity of the painters of that period are successfully emulated. The design is full of figures, yet it is not crowded; and the architectural lines of the composition, though distinctly marked, are subordinate to the groups ... The variety of action and character in the figures - old men and women with infants in their arms mingling in the throng - gives vivacity to the mass. The graceful forms of the women in the foreground relieve the monotony of old men in church vestements, and contrast with the naked form of the kneeling monarch ... The colouring is vivid but not gaudy, and the only objection to the fresco is its minuteness of detail.<sup>168</sup>

The last sentence of this review is compelling; of course, it strongly anticipates the tenor of the criticism levelled at the Pre-Raphaelites following their taking-up of Ruskin's famous call to young artists to "go to Nature in all singleness of heart ... rejecting nothing, selecting nothing, and scorning nothing."<sup>169</sup> One wonders, however, at the veracity of the complaint given the comments of *The Athenaeum* reviewer

<sup>166</sup> *Commissioners on the Fine Arts*, 5th report, 1846.

<sup>167</sup> It is perhaps also worth noting here that Dyce served as a replacement for Etty on the royal commission, split amongst a number of artists, to decorate a pavilion in Buckingham Palace with frescoes when the latter was unable to successfully manage the unfamiliar medium.

<sup>168</sup> *The Spectator*, No. 888 (5th July 1845) p. 664.

<sup>169</sup> John Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, vol. 1 (London, 1843) pp. 416-417.

concerning the difficulty of seeing the fresco and picking out details. Regardless, Dyce's first realisation of fresco in the New Houses of Parliament was documented by the young Pre-Raphaelites; Hunt, who portrayed a mentor/student relationship between Dyce and himself from the late 1840s onwards in his memoirs, presumably saw the fresco first-hand, writing:

Whatever the reason for bringing the [fresco] experiment to a close, I do not hesitate to affirm that *The Baptism of St. Ethelbert*, by Dyce; the water-glass paintings of *The Battle of Waterloo* and *The Battle of Trafalgar*, by Maclise; and the paintings in the corridor illustrating events of the Commonwealth by Cope, are of a kind which, if executed in Italy centuries ago, would cause many amateur art pilgrims to wend their way thither.

So too was Dyce's fresco design widely-disseminated in engraved form, being placed on the front page of *The Illustrated London News* (Fig. 189) following its unveiling. On the basis of this fresco, Waagen described Dyce as "eminently qualified to lay the foundation of a monumental school of art in England".<sup>170</sup>

Certainly Dyce's endeavours paved the way for the efforts of the Pre-Raphaelites, in both their first and second formation, to embody such a school. First, Dyce's assiduous research into Italian fresco techniques informed his practice, contributing both to a surge of interest in and approbation of mural painting in Britain - a direct consequence for Rossetti and a number of the 'second-generation' Pre-Raphaelites being the opportunity to decorate the Oxford Union, despite the issues that continued to haunt the Westminster project - and prefigured Ruskin's call for modern artists to adopt the more rigorous methods of the earlier masters.<sup>171</sup> Elements such as Dyce's use of white grounds, for example, and his recognition of the necessity of observing nature directly must have percolated into the consciousness of the young Pre-Raphaelites through Dyce's conversations with Hunt. Moreover, Dyce - who simultaneously took fifteenth-century forms as his models and set them in recognisably modern-day British landscapes - can be seen as a model for the recent characterisation of the contradictory status of the Pre-Raphaelites as both a revivalist and a realist movement.<sup>172</sup>

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The material presented in this chapter and that preceding it clearly demonstrates that the understanding of and approaches to fresco painting displayed by

<sup>170</sup>Gustav Friedrich Waagen, *Treasures of Art in Great Britain*, trans. Elizabeth Rigby, vol. 1 (London, 1854) p. 427.

<sup>171</sup>John Ruskin, *Works*, vol. 2, p. 249-302.

<sup>172</sup>Barringer, Rosenfeld and Smith, eds., 2012, p. 10.

William Blake and William Dyce diverged significantly. Common to both artists, however, was the investing of the art and techniques of the Trecento and Quattrocento with a moral purity, strongly religious in character. This ideology also found expression through the words and images of the Pre-Raphaelites, who counted Fra Angelico in their much debated *List of Immortals*. The following section of this thesis will further explicate the links between the Pre-Raphaelites, acknowledged as the first avant-garde movement in Western art, and the forerunners who have provided the subjects for the previous chapters.<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>173</sup>Elizabeth Prettejohn made this seminal claim for the Pre-Raphaelites in 2000, reassessing all aspects of their production and story in order to redress the negative received opinion regarding their archaism. Prettejohn, 2000.

## Chapter 10

# Conclusion.

William Dyce's diatribe against the National Gallery, with which this thesis began, came six years after the influential periodical *The Art Union* publicly counselled the government against their rumoured purchase for the nation of the well-known collection of works by primitives formed by the dealer Samuel Woodburn. Their well-rehearsed argument was that seeing such art would have a detrimental effect on national production: "We do not need the antiquities and curiosities of the early Italian painters, they would only infect our school with a retrograding mania of disfiguring Art."<sup>1</sup> Although the gallery acquired its first Italian primitives - the altarpiece panels of *Adoring Saints* (from the San Benedetto altarpiece) then attributed to Taddeo Gaddi, and now given to Lorenzo Monaco - only a year after the periodical's caution, this was by means of a gift rather than by design, and the active purchasing of early Italian art for the gallery was not sanctioned for almost a decade.<sup>2</sup> In the interim, the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood had formed and realised the worst fears of *The Art-Union* and many others - individuals and institutions - who comprised the Victorian viewing public. Dickens's vitriolic attack on the output of the Brotherhood is standardly cited, as much for the literary ingenuity of its satirical inventions as for its reflection of the contemporary reaction. Having excoriated Millais's 1850 Royal Academy exhibition piece *Christ in the House of his Parents*, Dickens mobilised the widely-accepted understanding of the cyclical nature of art history (birth, adolescence, maturity and decay) to attack the Pre-Raphaelites for their wilful subversion of progress:

Would it were in our power to congratulate our readers on the hopeful

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<sup>1</sup> *The Art-Union*, 9 (1847). This publication was renamed *The Art Journal* in 1849.

<sup>2</sup> The collector and connoisseur William Coningham donated the panels in 1848; for Coningham see Francis Haskell, 'William Coningham and His Collection of Old Masters', *Burlington Magazine*, 133 (1991) pp. 676-681. See Susanna Avery-Quash, 'The Travel Notebooks of Sir Charles Eastlake', *Walpole Society Journal*, 2 vols., 73 (2011) and Avery-Quash and Sheldon, 2011 for important and detailed accounts of the increasing significance afforded early Italian art in the active expansion of the National Gallery's collection in the middle of the nineteenth century.

prospects of the great retrogressive principle, of which this thoughtful picture is the sign and emblem! Would that we could give our readers encouraging assurance of a healthy demand for Old Lamps in exchange for New ones, and a steady improvement in the Old Lamp Market! The perversity of mankind is such, and the untoward arrangements of Providence are such, that we cannot lay that flattering unction to their souls. We can only report what Brotherhoods, stimulated by this sign, are forming; and what opportunities will be presented to the people, if the people will but accept them.<sup>3</sup>

The additional ‘Brotherhoods’ Dickens invented included the Pre-Perspective Brotherhood, the Pre-Newtonian Brotherhood, the Pre-Chaucerian Brotherhood and the Pre-Henry-the-Seventh Brotherhood.

Three years later, a more considered note was sounded by the art historian and director of the Berlin Gallery, Gustav Friedrich Waagen, whose opinion was solicited - as has been demonstrated in the previous chapters - on a variety of British art-related matters in the mid nineteenth century. Waagen cautioned the Pre-Raphaelites against making manifest what he understood to be the meaning underpinning their choice of name by imitating the “more or less undeveloped forms of the 15th century” in their quest to “elevate the character of modern art”, and cited the stylistic development of the Nazarenes in support of his case.<sup>4</sup> He argued that in emulating the style of the primitives the Pre-Raphaelites and Nazarenes had failed to understand that they:

... attract us not on account of their meagre drawing, hard outlines, erroneous perspective, conventional glories &c but, on the contrary, in spite of these defects and peculiarities. We overlook these simply and solely because, in the underdeveloped state of the scientific and technical resources of that period, they could not be avoided.<sup>5</sup>

As the reactions of both Dickens and Waagen demonstrate, there was certainly no wholesale shift towards an appreciation of early Italian art engendered by the initial artistic activities of the Pre-Raphaelites.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, as Susanna Avery-Quash and James Carleton-Paget very recently argued, even Charles Eastlake, who

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<sup>3</sup>Charles Dickens, ‘Old Lamps for New Ones’, *Household Words*, 12 (1850) pp. 12-14. Gombrich saw this anthropomorphic understanding of art history as being the foundation for what he termed the ‘Pre-Raphaelite Ideal’. Gombrich, 2002, p. 87.

<sup>4</sup>Gustav Friedrich Waagen, ‘To the Editor of the Times’, *London Times*, 21,792 (13 July 1854).

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup>It should be noted that a recent account of the Liverpool Royal Academy has argued for its pre-eminence in leading the taste for early Italian art. In 1840 the Trustees of the institution voted to spend £1200 on purchasing paintings for its permanent collection (formed primarily for the

in his role as Director of the National Gallery between 1855 and 1865 was at the forefront of integrating examples of the early Italian schools into the national collection, at best never publicly vocalised any support for the Pre-Raphaelites, if indeed the authors convincingly rebutted the received opinion that Eastlake perpetrated an anti-Pre-Raphaelite discourse within the Royal Academy.<sup>7</sup> Eastlake's later colleague the art critic and writer Ralph Wornum also clearly articulated, in language pregnant with allusions to Catholicism, the interlinked distaste for both the Pre-Raphaelites and Italian Quattrocento art. Wornum considered Pre-Raphaelite painting to demonstrate:

... two capital defects; it breathes in the spirit of its words the miserable asceticism of the darkest monastic ages; and exhibits in their execution quite the extremest littleness of style that ever disfigured the works of any of the early middle-age masters.<sup>8</sup>

Robyn Cooper analysed the degree to which attitudes towards early Italian art and Pre-Raphaelite art co-existed in a complex and symbiotic relationship; certainly in the discourse surrounding the Pre-Raphaelite paintings of 1849 and 1850 the deficient technical aspects of early Italian art must have been further amplified in the public consciousness.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, the economic signifiers of a change in taste amongst collectors demonstrates that prices for early Italian art remained low, compared to paintings by later artists, well into the 1850s and 60s.<sup>10</sup>

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benefit of the students there) and several of their purchases dated from the Italian fifteenth century. These works joined what was already a substantive corpus of primitive paintings - fourteenth- as well as fifteenth-century - which had been bequeathed by William Roscoe, referenced earlier in this thesis. Henry Marillier, an early twentieth-century historian of the Royal Institution, stressed its concomitant support for the fledgling Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. See Emma Roberts, 'The Academy as a Teaching Institution', in Edward Morris and Emma Roberts, eds., *The Liverpool Academy and Other Exhibitions of Contemporary Art in Liverpool 1774-1867* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1998) pp. 21-33 and Henry Marillier, *The Liverpool School of Painters* (London: John Murray, 1904), pp. 21-22.

<sup>7</sup>Susanna Avery-Quash and James Carleton-Paget, 'A Few Suggestive Sentences, as Pregnant as they are Unobtrusive': Charles Eastlake and the Pre-Raphaelites', *British Art Journal*, 13 (2012) pp. 3-18.

<sup>8</sup>Ralph Wornum, 'Modern Moves in Art', *The Art Journal*, 12 (1850) pp. 133-136.

<sup>9</sup>Robyn Cooper, 'The Relationship between the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and Painters before Raphael in English Criticism of the Late 1840s and 1850s', *Victorian Studies*, 24 (1981) pp. 405-438. Francis Haskell notably argued that the birth of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood stymied the development of interest in and appreciation for the Italian primitives. Haskell, 1976, p. 54.

<sup>10</sup>The prices realised in the sale of the relatively little-known collection of Horatio Walpole, 3rd Earl of Orford in 1856 provide a neat example. Rubens's *Rainbow Landscape* was purchased by the 4th Marquess of Hertford for 4,550 guineas, whereas Orford's small nucleus of primitives were valued at much less; the most expensive of the early works was an altarpiece by the German primitive Matthias Grünewald which was bought on behalf of Prince Albert for 130 guineas, and works attributed to Verrocchio and Filippo Lippi realised only 67 and 40 guineas respectively. For the evolution and dispersal of Orford's short-lived collection, see Carly Collier, 'A forgotten collector of early Italian art: Horatio Walpole, 3rd Earl of Orford', *Burlington Magazine*, 153 (2011) pp. 512-517.



Given this context, it is significant that recent revisionist accounts of the Pre-Raphaelite movement have focused, quite rightly, on its modernism, fighting against the standard early- to mid-twentieth-century understanding of the group as solely anachronistic and thus lacking in progression. Scholars have spotlighted the group's choice of name, or 'self-branding', and radically reinterpreted it.<sup>11</sup> Following Elizabeth Prettejohn, it has been argued that rather than solely indicating a specific tie to the period 1300-1500, the cumbersome nomenclature conversely also signified the Pre-Raphaelites' positioning of themselves as an avant-garde movement which embraced originality and rejected following a master; indeed, it could thus be construed that they were therefore inviting an identification with Raphael himself.<sup>12</sup> However, this interpretation does not entirely negate the influence - both aesthetic and ideological - of the Italian primitives, as has been acknowledged. The visual vocabulary employed by the Pre-Raphaelites was redolent of early Italian art (as has been demonstrated was the case with works by Dyce) with characteristics including un-idealised figures, clear colours with very little gradation in tone, shallow perspective, and an abundance of symbolism, and their choice - at least initially - of predominantly religious subject matter identified them with those artists of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries whose primary patrons were the church. Of course, despite these discernible influences, the modernity of the Pre-Raphaelites is also evidenced by the fact that their final productions were simultaneously very distant from both early Italian art and the paintings of Dyce, who fused stylistic elements of medieval art with more academically-sanctioned pictorial rules.

Moreover, the continuing significance of the Pre-Raphaelite's contemporaneous interpretation cannot be denied. *The Art Journal* considered Rossetti's *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin*, exhibited publicly in 1849, as:

the most successful [picture in the exhibition] as a pure imitation of early Florentine art that we have seen in this country. The artist has worked

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<sup>11</sup>As the previous chapter cited, Elizabeth Prettejohn was first to comprehensively and persuasively argue the case for the Pre-Raphaelites' status as the first avant-garde movement in nineteenth-century Western art.

<sup>12</sup>Within this interpretative framework, another reading could be brought to bear on a much-quoted comment from a letter written by Dante Gabriel Rossetti to his brother in 1848 which has generally been deployed as evidence that the Pre-Raphaelites were looking at early Italian art in this period (a very recent restatement of this understanding is evident in Isobel Armstrong, 'The Pre-Raphaelites and Literature', in Prettejohn, ed., 2012, pp. 15-31). Rossetti wrote: "[Keats] seems to have been a glorious fellow, and says in one place (to my great delight) that having just looked over a folio of the first & second schools of Italian painting, he has come to the conclusion that the early men surpassed even Rafael himself!!!" (Letter from Rossetti to William Michael Rossetti dated 20th August 1848. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *The Correspondence of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, ed. by William Fredeman, vol. 1 (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2002) p. 68). Might at least some of Rossetti's delight have come from the sacrilegiousness of Keats privileging the so-called lesser masters over the higher, and be linked to the young Rossetti's desire to overcome the British art establishment?

in austere cultivation of all the virtues of the ancient fathers ... with all the severities of the Giotteschi, we find necessarily the advances made by Pietro della Francesca and Paolo Uccello, without those of Masolino da Panicale.<sup>13</sup>

Almost a decade later, parallels continued to be drawn between the Pre-Raphaelites and early Italian art; the third volume of Ruskin's *Modern Painters* published in 1856 championed the early Italians and linked them to "the modern Pre-Raphaelite School",<sup>14</sup> and paintings by Millais and Holman Hunt exhibited at the 1857 Art Treasures exhibition in Manchester were discussed with reference to examples in the same exhibition ascribed to Giotto and Duccio.<sup>15</sup> This, then, was the aesthetic, religious and ideological framework within which collectors, critics and fellow artists believed the Pre-Raphaelites' art to function.

It is regrettable, therefore, that scholars of Victorian art and the Pre-Raphaelites in particular appear to have remained content to repeatedly cite a small nucleus of early Italian artworks which the Brotherhood are known to have encountered.<sup>16</sup> Additionally, with the exception of the Lasinio engravings, which have long occupied the privileged position of catalyst or trigger for the movement, it is the Pre-Raphaelites' relationship with paintings that has been primarily interrogated, which raises issues surrounding the status afforded different forms of visual representation. Whilst identifying visual connections retrospectively is a task which should be approached with caution, direct absence of reference does not necessarily translate to either ignorance or disinterest. Perhaps one of the more infamous examples which has taxed scholars for decades in relation to the Pre-Raphaelites is the seemingly complete lack of evidence for their having visited the 1848 British Institution exhibition, at which a number of paintings attributed to primitives were shown.<sup>17</sup> It certainly seems a strange state of affairs that either none of the Brotherhood evaluated the exhibition - which was widely discussed in both the art-historical-specific and more general

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<sup>13</sup>'The Hyde Park Gallery', *The Art-Journal*, 11 (April 1849) p. 147.

<sup>14</sup>"The perfect unison of expression, as the painter's main purpose, with the full and natural exertion of his pictorial power in the details of the work, is found only in the old Pre-Raphaelite periods, and in the modern Pre-Raphaelite school." John Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, vol. 3 (London, 1856) p. 30.

<sup>15</sup>Joseph Beavington Atkinson's comments on the early masters and the Pre-Raphaelite painters are one such example: see Joseph Beavington Atkinson, 'Manchester Exhibition of Art Treasures', *Blackwood's Magazine*, 81 (1857). A long-overdue full-length study of the Manchester exhibition has only recently been published, which is notable for its meticulous analysis of the role accorded the primitives within the exhibition. See Elizabeth Pergam, *The Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857: Entrepreneurs, Connoisseurs and the Public* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), particularly Chapter Four.

<sup>16</sup>See Gail Weinberg, "Looking backward": opportunities for the Pre-Raphaelites to see 'pre-Raphaelite' art' in Margaretta Frederick Watson, ed., *Collecting the Pre-Raphaelites* (Ashgate: Aldershot, 1997) pp. 51-64 for a concise summary of this nucleus.

<sup>17</sup>Haskell, 1976, p. 49.

press - as worth a visit, or that, if they did, no record of such a visit survives.<sup>18</sup>

This thesis has therefore sought to contribute to and augment the current state of knowledge regarding both known and highly-likely source material for the Pre-Raphaelites. As the final section of this thesis explicated, there were direct links between members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and both William Blake and William Dyce. In addition to a connection fostered through the Royal Academy, Dyce's work was visible and widely discussed in the latter half of the 1840s - particularly at the time of the Houses of Parliament fresco competition. Dyce, more than any other artist discussed in this thesis, offered the Pre-Raphaelites a profound model of approach to painting in a manner that rejected contemporary academic theory and sought a simpler aesthetic.<sup>19</sup> Prettejohn made the important point that the Pre-Raphaelites attempted an inverse form of the avant-garde attack associated with the French artists of the nineteenth century in that they created and exhibited history paintings, the highest artistic genre, which contrasted dramatically with (and implicitly commented on) the portraits, genre and 'popular history' paintings that habitually crowded the wall space of public exhibitions in Britain.<sup>20</sup> Dyce and a small nucleus of contemporaries had already been exhibiting history paintings themselves, however, and scholars have interpreted a somewhat unusual phrase used in a letter by William Rossetti - discussing subscriptions to the short-lived periodical *The Germ* - as evidence for the PRB's sustained knowledge of and engagement with the activities of Dyce and his fellow revivalist, John Rogers Herbert. Rossetti wrote that the periodical, in "proceeding in somewhat the same sympathies as [Herbert], seeks to out-Herbert Herbert."<sup>21</sup>

With regard to William Blake, although c. 1830-1860 his reputation underwent what could be described as a fallow period, the Rossetti brothers acquired a note-book belonging to him as early as 1847.<sup>22</sup> It is difficult to establish how much

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<sup>18</sup>*The Spectator*, for example, commented on the "unusual interest" of the exhibition, which opened in June 1848, for its "bringing together specimens of the most distant ages and the most distant styles ... so that within the compass of three rooms, the student of painting ... can trace the development of the art from its imperfect germ ... to full maturity." The review as a whole is extremely positive about the early Italians. *The Spectator*, 17 June 1848, p. 17.

<sup>19</sup>Nancy Langham very recently made a similar case for the artist John Rogers Herbert, a friend and fellow employee of Dyce's at the Government School of Design in the 1840s who was to convert to Catholicism. Langham's thesis is the first monograph and full assessment of Herbert's life and *oeuvre*: Nancy Langham, "The Splendour and Beauty of Truth': John Rogers Herbert, R.A. (1810-1890)", unpublished Ph.D thesis (Oxford Brookes University, 2012).

<sup>20</sup>Prettejohn, 2000, pp. 36-38.

<sup>21</sup>See Prettejohn, 2000, p. 54 and Alison Smith, 'Revival and Reformation: the aims and ideals of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood', in Joyce Townsend, Jacqueline Ridge and Stephen Hackney, eds., *Pre-Raphaelite Painting Techniques: 1848-56* (London: Tate, 2004) p. 14.

<sup>22</sup>Leonée Ormond, 'Rossetti and the Old Masters', *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 36 (2006) pp. 153-168.

of Blake's work they may have seen; the older artist's very limited patronage meant that many of the temperas, large colour prints and illuminated books were dispersed and hidden within private collections. However, as Laura McCulloch - drawing on the research of Jennijoy La Belle - argued in her examination of the issue of Ford Madox Brown's influences, Blake's name remained current in the art-historical literature of the 1830s and some of his work was reproduced.<sup>23</sup> Blake's attitude toward 'fresco' and adoption of the word can, however, be seen as analogous to William Holman Hunt's definition of bad antiquarianism in painting, in which anachronistic elements or details were included for decorative effect, which Hunt sought to simultaneously identify with Rossetti's early works and distance himself from.<sup>24</sup> Whilst both earlier artists have been discussed in relation to the Pre-Raphaelites before, the chapters in Part III microscopically examined different facets of Blake and Dyce's engagement with early Italian art and artists - their integration of stylistic features, terminology and ideas then particularly associated with the primitives - so as to deepen our understanding of the scope and impact of their influence on the Pre-Raphaelites.

In the cases of the scholarship of Thomas Patch and the Callcotts, their influence was multiply refracted through various aspects of Pre-Raphaelite engagement. It is first instructive to briefly review the works in comparison. The material produced by Patch and the Callcotts differs in a number of ways - predominantly accuracy, scope and ambition, all of which can be understood as a consequence of the authors' differing situations. In terms of the latter two categories, Patch's position in Italy in the 1770s - a period during which, as has been demonstrated, Italians themselves were assiduously exploring their medieval and early Renaissance history - was arguably a more comfortable one from which to attempt to spotlight the artistic achievements of early Italian artists who, in the climate of 1830s Britain, were frequently identified as a religious 'other' and sometimes even threat.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, Patch's physical proximity to his source material allowed for an infinitely more detailed and accurate study and then, subsequently, reproduction of the works of his chosen artists than the Callcotts were capable of. As this thesis has argued, though,

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<sup>23</sup>Laura MacCulloch, 'Ford Madox Brown: Works on Paper and Archive Material at Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery', unpublished Ph.D thesis (University of Birmingham, 2009) pp. 47-48, and Jennijoy La Belle, 'William Blake's Reputation in the 1830s: Some unrecorded Documents,' *Modern Philology*, 84 (1987) pp. 302-307.

<sup>24</sup>David Bentley, 'Dante Gabriel Rossetti's "Absurd", Antiquarian, and "Modern-Antique" Mediaevalism(s): *Girlhood of Mary Virgin*, *The Bride's Prelude* and "Stratton Walter"', *Victorian Poetry*, 51 (2013) pp. 99-125.

<sup>25</sup>Much of the antagonism directed towards William Dyce and other revivalists in the 1840s and the Pre-Raphaelites (after the meaning of their monogram became widely known) slightly later has been attributed to renewed fears of Catholic resurgence in Britain, sparked by the Catholic emancipation act in 1832 and the re-establishment of the Catholic hierarchy with the appointment of Nicholas Wiseman to the position of Archbishop of Westminster.

their scholarship shares with Patch's a progressive curiosity about and appreciation for a period of the visual arts then largely disregarded by the masses.

Incrementally, the volumes produced by Patch and the Callcotts percolated through British culture on a multiplicity of levels. Through donation by Maria herself, the *Description* joined Patch's Fra Bartolommeo and Ghiberti volumes in the Royal Academy in 1835, meaning that all students and members of the institution - including the Pre-Raphaelites in the mid-1840s - had access to it as a visual resource. The *Description* took longer to reach the collection of the British Museum, where the Pre-Raphaelites are known to have consulted medieval manuscripts, but copies of Patch's Masaccio engravings and that after Paolo Uccello's fresco commemorating Sir John Hawkwood were acquired by the institution and present in its print room from 1845. It has also been demonstrated that Anna Jameson mined both Patch's illustrations and those of Callcott - the first acknowledged, the second not - in her *Memoirs of the Early Italian Painters* (1845), further illustrating that both sets of authors' publications continued to be widely read and disseminated. Rossetti was also given a copy of Jameson's book by his godfather Charles Lyell, and concordances have been identified between some of his early figures and Jameson's illustrations.<sup>26</sup> The examples cited are not either of those noted in this thesis, but if Jameson appropriated more illustrations from other reproductive images than that would place Rossetti even further from the original early Italian source. Additionally, Rossetti and Hunt are known to have copied the Ghiberti casts at the Royal Academy, and it seems fair to venture that they may have perused the engravings by Patch and Gregori after them in the library of the same institution.<sup>27</sup> A final example of the general state of knowledge regarding Patch's engravings, in particular, is given in a review of the 1857 Art Treasures exhibition. The author of the piece made reference to 'Patch' having engraved the 'Giotto' Carmine frescoes; the lack of further identificatory detail implies a familiarity amongst artists and connoisseurs with his name and, concomitantly, the subsequent encouragement to the reader to identify the exhibits - two fresco fragments - within Patch's engravings implies that the reader would know where to source or consult one of his volumes.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>26</sup>David Ludley, 'Anna Jameson and D. G. Rossetti: His Use of Her Histories', *Woman's Art Journal*, 12, (1991 - 1992), pp. 29-33. This article perhaps initially insists too heavily on corollaries between the thoughts of Rossetti and Jameson that were common to others who evinced an interest in the primitives at this time.

<sup>27</sup>Hunt, vol. 1, 1905, p. 106. Ghiberti was, as is well known, one of the only two early Italian artists included in the Pre-Raphaelite's 'List of Immortals' (the other being Fra Angelico).

<sup>28</sup>"Two dark and unattractive fragments in fresco flank [the Rev. Davenport Bromley's *Coronation of the Virgin*, then attributed to Giotto]. They have been sent from Liverpool, and originally formed part of the wall of the Carmine Church at Florence, destroyed by fire in 1771. The mural decorations by Giotto had been engraved only a few months before by Patch, in whose work these portions of figures may be easily identified." *The Athenaeum*, May 2nd, 1857.

Thus Patch and the Callcotts had a tangible impact on mainstream art knowledge, theory and taste, as did Blake and Dyce, who assimilated what was recognised as a medievalist aesthetic and earlier artistic practices and techniques into their own *oeuvres*. In doing so, these artists significantly offered connoisseurs, collectors and their fellow artists both visual and textual information concerning an alternative period of Italian art in an era dominated by the art of classical antiquity, the High Renaissance and the seventeenth century. The chapters in this thesis devoted to these four artists (and Maria Callcott) also therefore argue for the value of the activities, interests and projects pursued by these individuals in and of themselves and in relation to their specific temporal artistic contexts, not just as adjuncts to the larger issue of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood's development.

Much more work remains to be done on this topic, and recovering the further examples - large and small - that exist of the transference of visual knowledge and influence from Trecento and Quattrocento Italy to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain is essential. One perhaps obvious strand of enquiry that has been touched on only obliquely in the course of this thesis is the role accorded to and played by early Northern European art in the decades around the turn of the nineteenth century. It is not an over-simplification to state that the Flemish, German and Dutch primitives were even less known and understood than their Italian counterparts, and the lack of attention paid to such art two hundred years ago can perhaps be paralleled with current historiographical trends in art history. There have really only been two recent (English-language) publications to treat the issue of the reception of early Northern art in any depth,<sup>29</sup> though explorations of potential influences on the Pre-Raphaelites have continued to flag the significance of the presence of Jan Van Eyck's *Arnolfini Portrait* in the national collection during their formative period, following Malcolm Warner's important identification of the painting's considerable influence on the young men.<sup>30</sup> Integrating an account of the responses - both artistic and scholarly - to Northern European primitives with those to early Italian art would allow the mapping of similar and different strategies of seeing, understanding and appreciating these types of artworks that were, as this thesis has shown, anti-academic and therefore unfamiliar to many.

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<sup>29</sup>Bernhard Ridderbos, Anne van Burn and Henk van Veen, eds., *Early Netherlandish Paintings: Rediscovery, Reception and Research* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2005) and Graham, 2007.

<sup>30</sup>Malcolm Warner, 'The Pre-Raphaelites and the National Gallery', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 55 (1992) pp. 1-11.

Additionally, this investigation has highlighted the multiple connections - some literal and direct, and some through intermediaries or diachronic - that existed between the artists both central and peripheral to this research. Artists' networks have long been recognised as fertile loci for the dissemination of practical and theoretical artistic knowledge, and the knowledge-sharing relationships between artists in relation to early art requires further probing.

This thesis has demonstrated the multifaceted nature of the interest in the primitives evinced by the four artists investigated in it, augmented by additional references to the responses of other eighteenth- and nineteenth-century painters and sculptors. Patch and the Callcotts were particularly focused on expression, which Winckelmann had regarded as antipathetic to ideal beauty.<sup>31</sup> Blake and Dyce were engaged with issues of technique and medium, essentially concerned with the successful manipulation of pigments on varying supports. Patch and Blake appear to have conceptualised their interest in the primitives as a means of making and securing their own artistic and scholarly reputations. Finally, the examples and activities of both the Callcotts and Dyce evidence the fact that religion came to be increasingly valorised as the key to an understanding and appreciation of early Italian art. One of the primary aims of this thesis has been to rescue the often marginalised contributions to the resurgence of interest in early Italian art of the four artists profiled in it, and to attempt to initiate the process of their work being integrated into the more established narrative of the rediscovery of the primitives. Furthermore, this thesis has demonstrated how fundamental these artists' interpretive filter was for the nature of the quasi-revolution in taste of the second half of the nineteenth century.

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<sup>31</sup>Shiff, 1988, p. 12-18.

# Appendix

The following table is designed to give a snapshot of the acquisitive interest in the primitives in Britain in 1810 (roughly the mid-point of the time frame under investigation in this thesis), displaying a selection of paintings and drawings by, or attributed to, primitives then in circulation. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century owners are listed where known. The works are listed under the collections in which they currently reside.

Artist	Title	Date	Medium	Previous Owners
<b>British Museum, London</b>				
Benozzo Gozzoli	Two young men	1435-1494	pen and brown ink, brown wash with traces of chalk	Jonathan Richardson, Sir John Charles Robinson
School of Fra Angelico	Pope Clement V on horse-back	1402-1455	pen and brown ink with brown wash	Jonathan Richardson, Reynolds, William Young Ottley, Conrad Martin Metz, Thomas Lawrence (all as Stefano Fiorentino), Sir John Charles Robinson (as Raffaellino del Garbo)
Anonymous	Six women in drapery, turned to right	c. 1400	pen and brown ink	Jonathan Richardson, William Young Ottley, Sir Thomas Lawrence (all as Giotto)
Lorenzo Monaco	Annunciation	c. 1410	pen and brown ink with grey-brown wash over black chalk(?) on vellum	William Young Ottley (as Don Silvestro), Thomas Lawrence (as Taddeo Gaddi)
Circle of Pietro Perugino	Virgin and Child	c. 1465 - 1523(?)	pen and brown ink	Reynolds (as Perugino); later sold by Samuel Woodburn as an early Raphael
<b>National Gallery, London</b>				
Giovanni Bellini	Agony in the Garden	c. 1465	egg tempera on wood	Reynolds (as Mantegna)



Spinello Aretino	Two Haloed Mourners	c. 1390	fresco	Charles Townley (as Giotto), Charles Greville (as Masaccio) William Young Ottley and Samuel Rogers (both as Giotto)
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**Courtauld Gallery, London**

Andrea Mantegna	Studies for Christ at the Column, recto and verso	c. 1460	pen and brown ink	John Skippe (as Bellini)
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**Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge**

Botticelli	Cartoons	c. 1410s	pen and brown ink	William Young Ottley, Thomas Lawrence
Fra Angelico	Saint	c. 1410s	pen and brown ink	Paul Sandby

**Christchurch Picture Gallery, Oxford**

c. 65 drawings attributed to Florentine, Sienese and Bolognese artists including Giotto and Verrocchio		c. 1300 - 1500		Vasari, Ridolfi; General John Guise bequest, 1745
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**Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland**

Parri Spinelli	free copy after Giotto's Navicella	c. 1410s	pen and brown ink	Jonathan Richardson, Reynolds, Conrad Martin Metz, William Young Ottley (all as Giotto)
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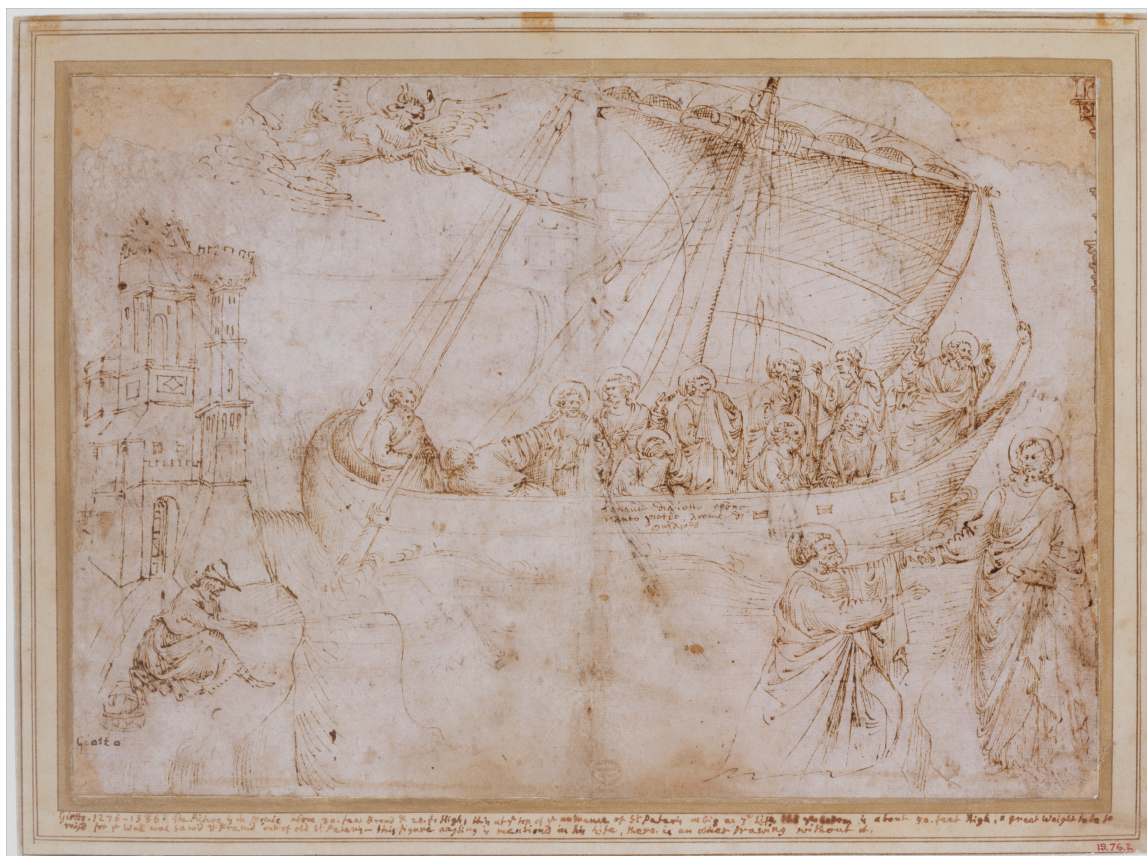


Figure 9: Parri Spinelli, free copy after Giotto's *Navicella*, c. 1410s,  
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Figure 15: Conrad Martin Metz, print after Giotto's *Navicella*, *Imitations of Ancient and Modern Drawings*, 2nd ed., 1798, 12.6 x 17.1 in.

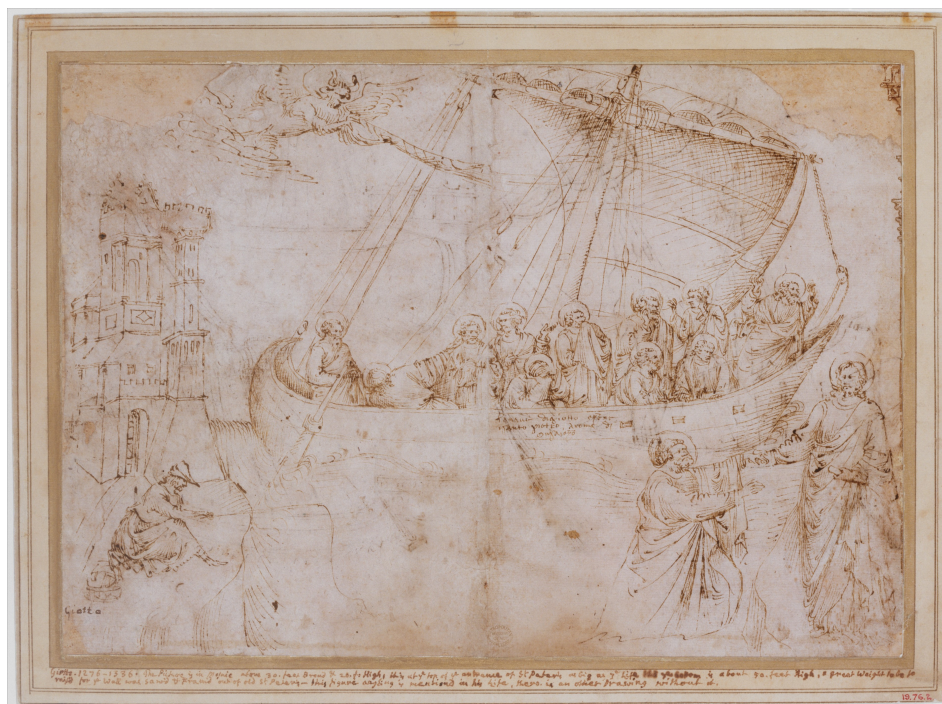


Figure 16: Parri Spinelli, free copy after Giotto's *Navicella*, c. 1410s, pen and brown ink, 10 x 15 in., Metropolitan Museum of Art, Cleveland

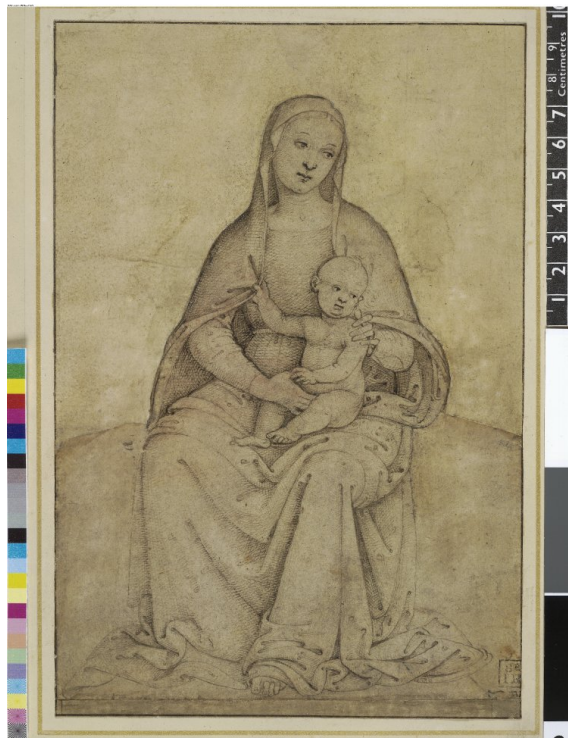


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All illustrations by Patch unless otherwise stated.

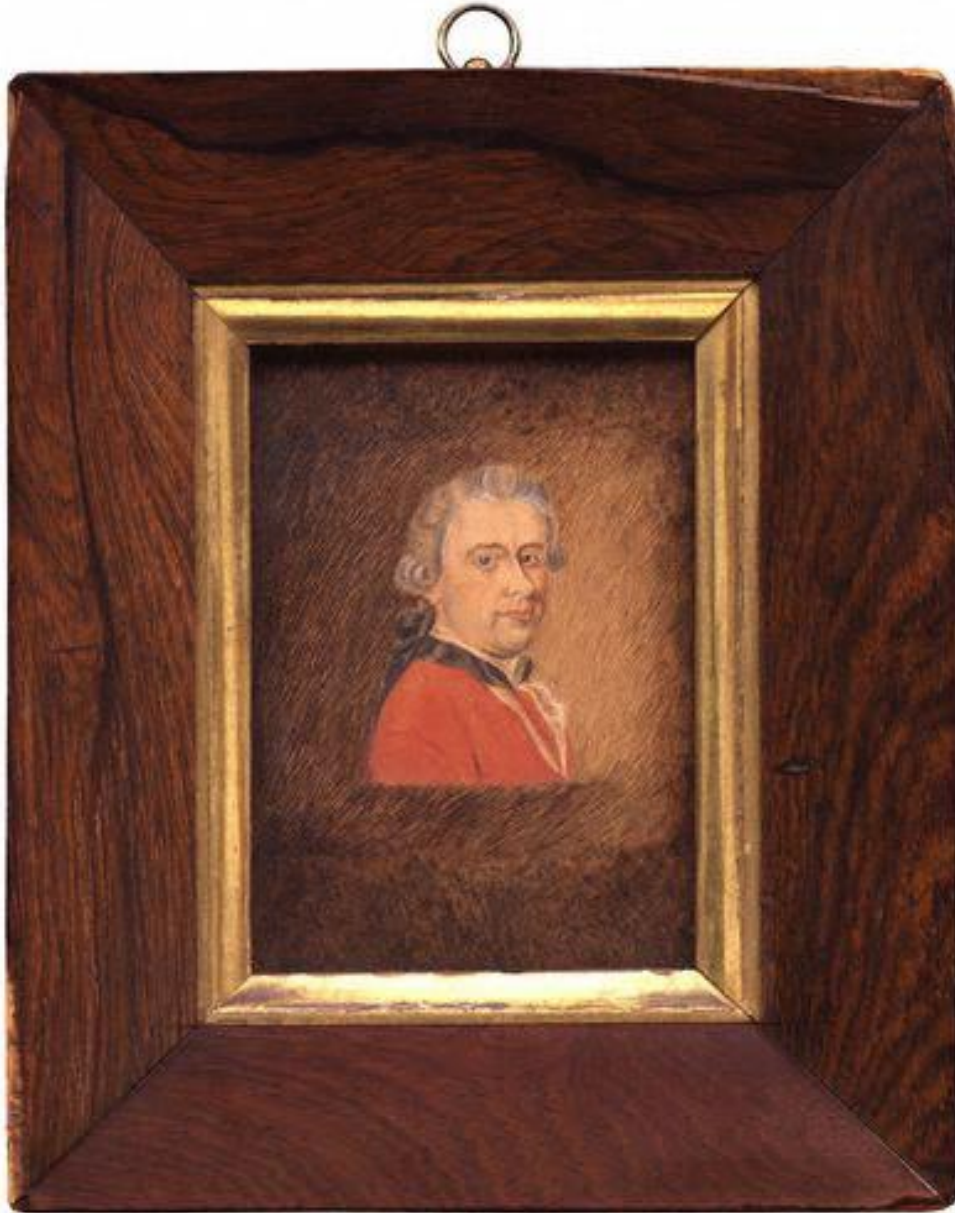


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National Portrait Gallery, London





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**d—BMPD 201 a 10, fol. 52<sup>r</sup> (p. 161)**

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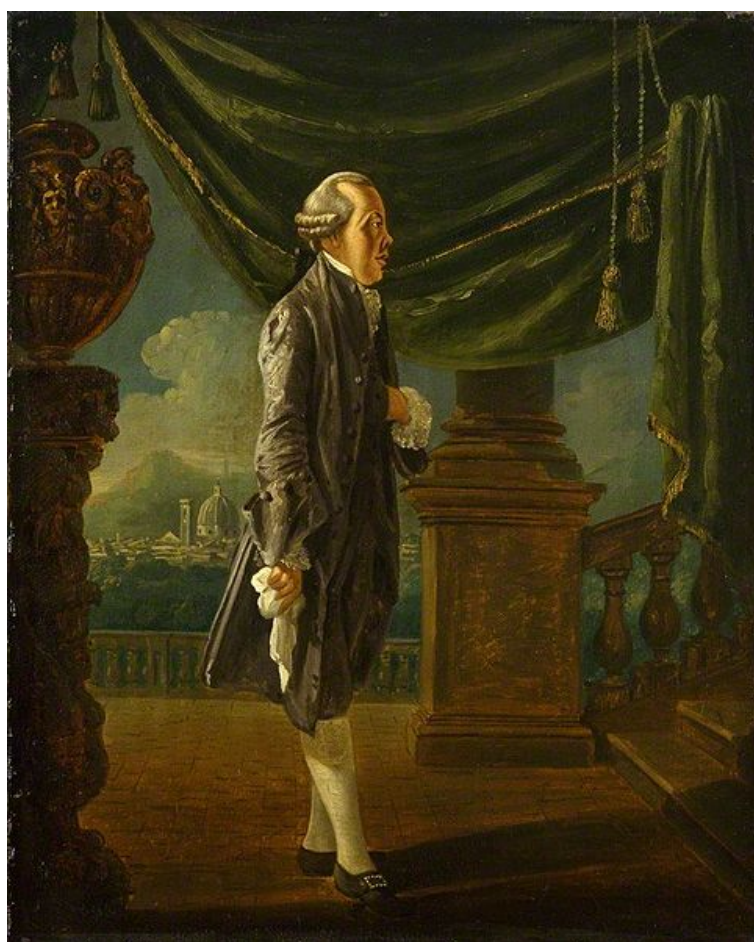
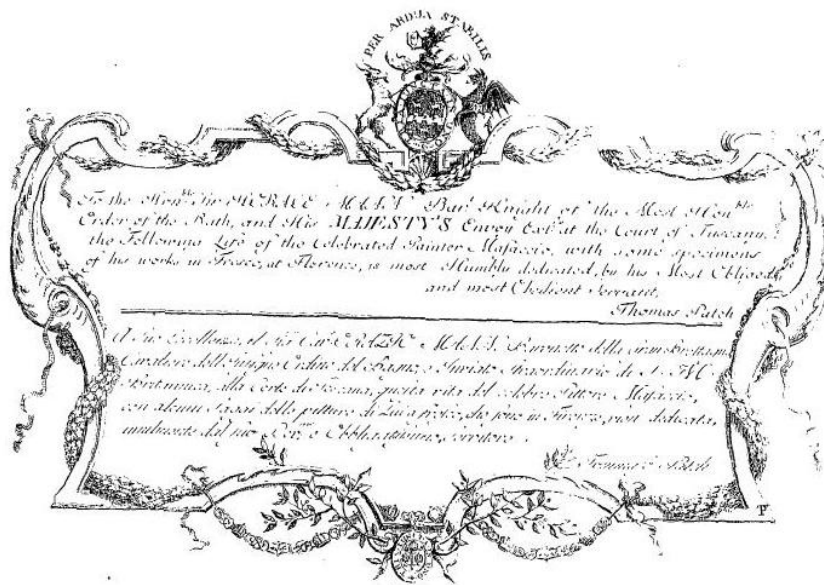


Figure 28: *John Ker*,  
*3rd Duke of Roxburghe*, c. 1761,  
oil on canvas, 25.3 x 20.1 in.,  
National Portrait Gallery, London



## THOMAS PATCH \* TOMMASO PATCH

PAINTER

TO THE LOVERS OF THE ART OF PAINTING.

PITTORE

AGLI INTENDENTI DELL'ARTI DEL DISEGNO.

Those who are conversant in the fine Arts are without doubt informed that a Painter known by the name of Masaccio lived in Florence about three hundred and forty years ago. In his youth he discovered a surprising genius of invention and it was his good fortune to live at a time when the Arts began to rise again, though to him is principally owing the restoration of that of Painting.

Masaccio was born in the year 1402. when Brunellesco and Donatello by the strength of their own genius and industry had restored the Arts of Sculpture and Architecture, Masaccio from a similitude in genius, contracted an ear-

ly

Si sa per tutte le Scuole, che vi è stato Masaccio Pittore in Firenze, trecentoquaranta anni fa, giovane d'ingegno originale, ed inventore, ed uno di quei che nascono rari fra la moltitudine imitatrice; ed ebbe anche la fortuna di nascere in tale età, che mentre riforgevano le altre Arti del Disegno porò a lui toccare in sorte la gloria di risuscitar la Pittura, e che da lui se ne conti il principio.

Masaccio al nascer suo nel 1402. trovò già fattisi maestri da loro stessi il Brunellesco e Donatello ritrovatori della Scultura e dell'Architettura, ingegni sublimi, e due primi lumi nella Storia nostra, e fatto amico di questi due Filosofi per somiglianza di costumi, finchè visse

Figure 29: Introduction,  
La Vita di Masaccio, 1770,  
etching, (plate-mark) 13 x 8.9 in., (sheet) 17.9 x 14.1 in.

N.º II



Figure 30: Plate II,  
*La Vita di Masaccio*, 1770,  
etching, (plate-mark) 13 x 8.9 in., (sheet) 17.9 x 14.1 in.



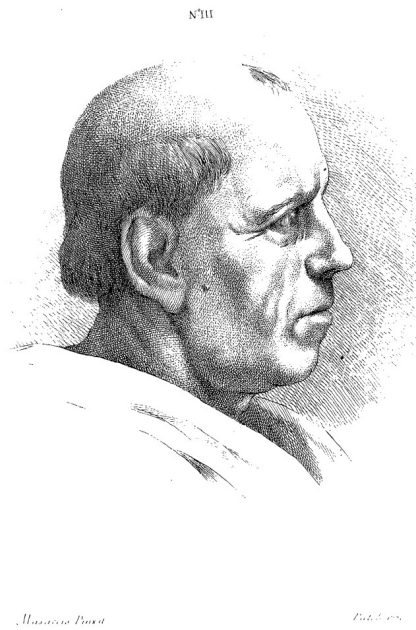


Figure 31: Plate III,  
*La Vita di Masaccio*, 1770,  
 etching, (plate-mark) 13 x 8.9 in., (sheet) 17.9 x 14.1 in.



Figure 32: Filippino Lippi,  
 Detail from *Disputation with Simon Magus and Crucifixion of St Peter*, 1484-1485,  
 fresco, (entire fresco) 90.5 x 235.4 in.,  
 Brancacci Chapel, Sta. Maria del Carmine, Florence





Figure 33: Plate V,  
*La Vita di Masaccio*, 1770,  
etching, (plate-mark) 13 x 8.9 in., (sheet) 17.9 x 14.1 in.



Figure 34: Masaccio and Filippino Lippi,  
Detail from *Raising of the Son of Theophilus and St Peter Enthroned*,  
1426-1427/1484-1485,  
fresco, (entire fresco) 90.5 x 235.4 in.,  
Brancacci Chapel, Sta. Maria del Carmine, Florence



Figure 35: Plate XI,  
*La Vita di Masaccio*, 1770,  
 etching, (plate-mark) 13 x 8.9 in., (sheet) 17.9 x 14.1 in.



Figure 36: Plate XIV,  
*La Vita di Masaccio*, 1770,  
 etching, (plate-mark) 13 x 8.9 in., (sheet) 17.9 x 14.1 in.



Figure 37: Plate XIII,  
*La Vita di Masaccio*, 1770,  
etching, (plate-mark) 13 x 8.9 in., (sheet) 17.9 x 14.1 in.



Figure 38: Plate VII,  
*La Vita di Masaccio*, 1770,  
etching, (plate-mark) 13 x 8.9 in., (sheet) 17.9 x 14.1 in.



Figure 39: Antonio Maria Zanetti, after Parmigianino, *The Entombment*, 1723, chiaroscuro woodcut, 7.4 x 4.7 in. (image/sheet, trimmed to block)



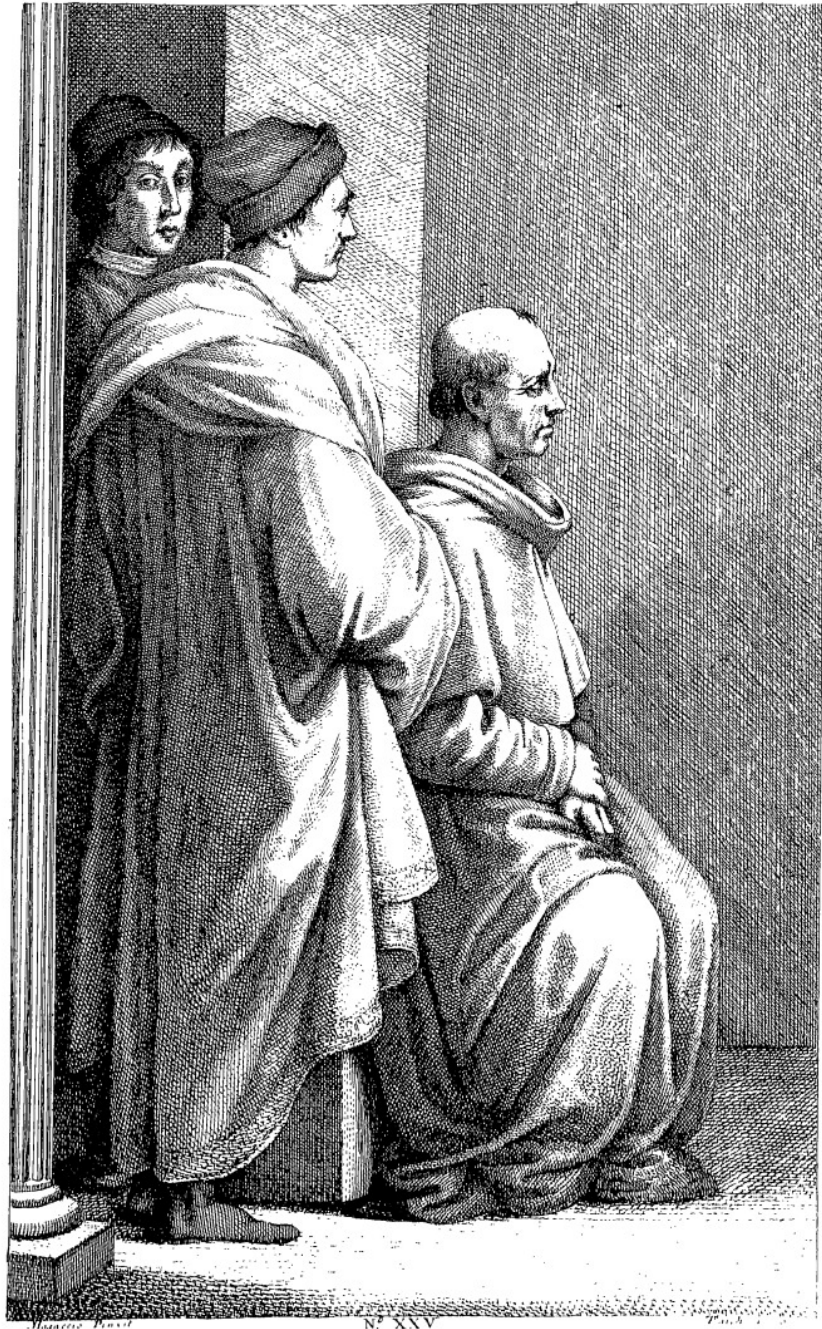


Figure 40: Plate XXV,  
*La Vita di Masaccio*, 1770,  
 etching, (plate-mark) 13 x 8.9 in., (sheet) 17.9 x 14.1 in.



Figure 41: Plate XXVI,  
*La Vita di Masaccio*, 1770,  
etching, (plate-mark) 13 x 8.9 in., (sheet) 17.9 x 14.1 in.



Figure 42: Ludvig von Siegen after Annibale Caracci,  
Detail from *Holy Family and St John the Baptist*, c. 1760,  
mezzotint, 13 x 10.7 in.



Figure 43: Plate III,  
*La Vita di Masaccio*, 1770,  
etching, (plate-mark) 13 x 8.9 in., (sheet) 17.9 x 14.1 in.



Figure 44: Filippino Lippi,  
Detail from *Disputation with Simon Magus and Crucifixion of St Peter*, 1484-1485,  
fresco, (entire fresco) 90.5 x 235.4 in.,  
Brancacci Chapel, Sta. Maria del Carmine, Florence



Figure 45: Plate I,  
*La Vita di Masaccio*, 1770,  
etching, (plate-mark) 13 x 8.9 in., (sheet) 17.9 x 14.1 in.

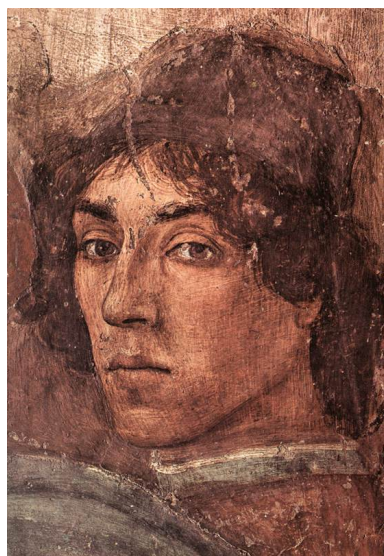


Figure 46: Filippino Lippi,  
Detail from *Disputation with Simon  
Magus and Crucifixion of St Peter*,  
1484-1485,  
fresco, (entire fresco) 90.5 x 235.4 in.,  
Brancacci Chapel, Sta. Maria del  
Carmine, Florence



Figure 47: Filippino Lippi,  
*Self-Portrait*, c. 1460,  
detached fresco on tile,  
19.6 x 12.2 in.,  
Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence





## TOMMASO PATCH

AL LETTORE.



**Q**ueste pitture di Giotto nella Chiesa del Carmine non si vedranno mai più fuor che in queste mie stampe, poichè sono state distrutte dall' incendio del 28. Gennajo dell' anno passato.

E fino la Cappella istessa non vi è più, e vi è piantato un de' quattro sodi che han da reggere la cupola secondo il modello della Chiesa, che si risabbrica.

Io solamente ne ho salvati pochi pezzi concessimi dai padroni che ho potuto staccare dal muro. E poichè tutto dovea perire ho voluto conservarne la memoria, perchè il tutto insieme considerato può essere di qualche piacere a chi vuol riflettere sul gusto delle diverse età.

I ha-

## THOMAS PATCH

TO THE READER.



**T**hose pictures of Giotto in the Church of the Carmelites, are no more to be seen accepting in the following prints, as they have been destroy'd since the fire, which happend the 28.<sup>th</sup> of January last year.

And even the chapel it self is no more, and in its room, built up one of the piers which is to sustain, the cupola of the Church, which is now rebuilding.

I only have saved some pieces with the permission of the owners of the chapel, which I have taken of the wall, and since the whole was to have been destroyd, I was desirous of preserving at least the memory, which may give some pleasure to those, who are willing to reflect on the different stages of painting.

Rep-

Figure 48: Introduction, *La Vita di Giotto*, 1772, etching, (leaves) 18.8 x 14.1 in.

DEPOSITO

DI GIOTTO



ILLE EGO SUM PER QUEM PICTURA EXTINGUITA REVIXIT.  
CUI QUAM RECTA MANVS, TAM FVIT, ET FACILIS.  
NATVRA DEPRAT, NOSTRÆ QVOD DEFVIT ARTI  
PLVS LICVIT NVLLI PINGERE, NEC MELIVS  
PIRARIS TVRRIM EGREGIAM SACRO ERE SONANTEM.  
HÆC QVQVE DE MODVLO CREVIT AD ASTRA MEO.  
DENIQVE SVN IOTTVS, QVID OPVS FVIT ILLA REFERRE.  
HOC NOMEN LONGE CARMINIS INSTAR ERIT.  
OB AN. MCCCXXXVI CIVIS POS. B. M. MCCCCLXXX.

*Da publico decreto, e per opera, et affigione particolare del Magnifico Senato Vecchio de' Medici, ammirato le virtù di tanto huomo, fu posta in Santa Ma-  
ria del Fiore, l'effigie sua, sculpta di marmo, da Benedetto da Maiano, l'antico, con ali, soprajacilli vestiti, fatti dal divin huomo M. Angelo Poliziano.  
Tatti.*

Figure 49: Plate I,  
*La Vita di Giotto*, 1772,  
etching, (leaves) 18.8 x 14.1 in.



Figure 50: Plate II,  
*La Vita di Giotto*, 1772,  
 etching with aquatint shading, (leaves) 18.8 x 14.1 in.



Figure 51: Plate III,  
*La Vita di Giotto*, 1772,  
 etching with aquatint shading, (leaves) 18.8 x 14.1 in.

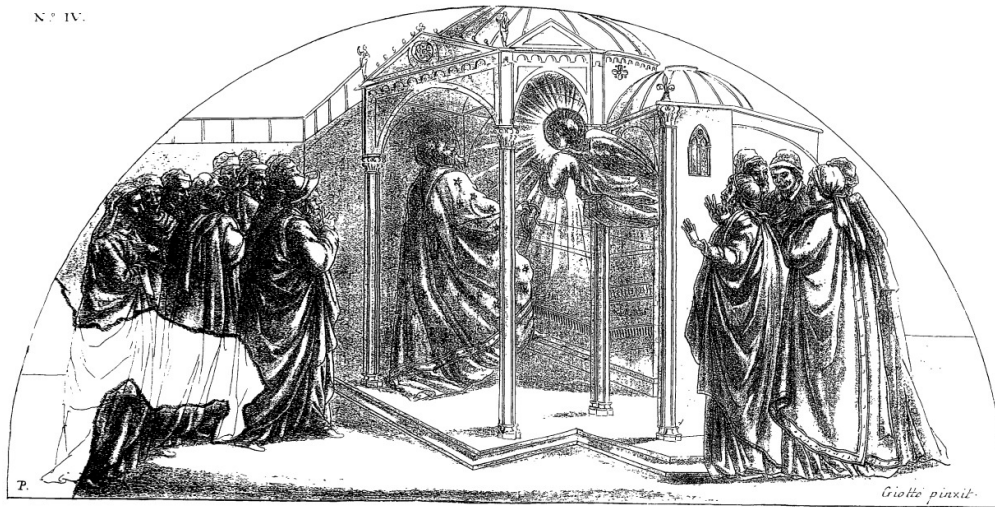


Figure 52: Plate IV,  
*La Vita di Giotto*, 1772,  
 etching with aquatint shading, (leaves) 18.8 x 14.1 in.



Figure 53: Plate V,  
*La Vita di Giotto*, 1772,  
 etching with aquatint shading, (leaves) 18.8 x 14.1 in.

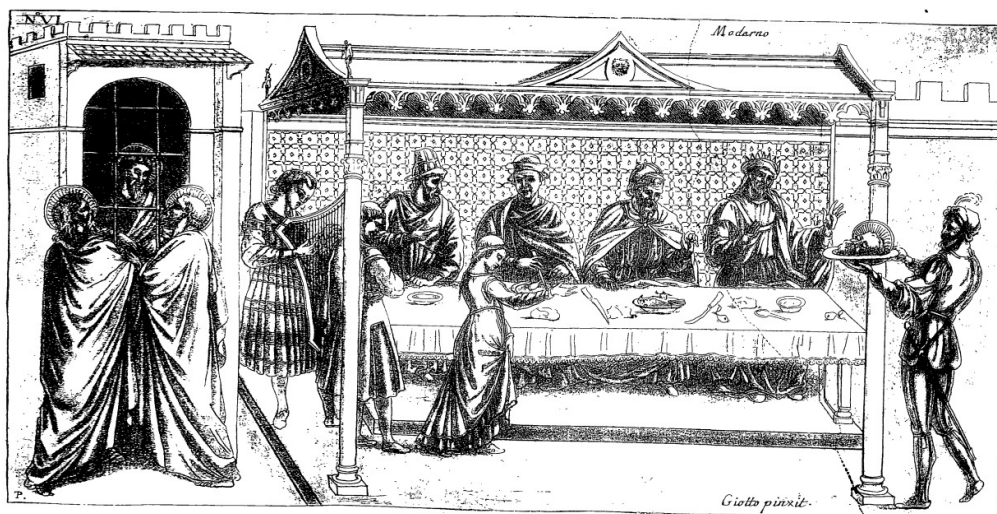


Figure 54: Plate VI,  
*La Vita di Giotto*, 1772,  
etching with aquatint shading, (leaves) 18.8 x 14.1 in.



Figure 55: Plate VII,  
*La Vita di Giotto*, 1772,  
etching with aquatint shading, (leaves) 18.8 x 14.1 in.





Figure 56: Plate VIII,  
*La Vita di Giotto*, 1772,  
etching, (leaves) 18.8 x 14.1 in.



Figure 57: Plate IX,  
*La Vita di Giotto*, 1772,  
etching,  
(leaves) 18.8 x 14.1 in.



Figure 58: Plate X,  
*La Vita di Giotto*, 1772,  
etching,  
(leaves) 18.8 x 14.1 in.

N<sup>o</sup> XI.



Figure 59: Plate XI,  
*La Vita di Giotto*, 1772,  
etching, (leaves) 18.8 x 14.1 in.

N<sup>o</sup> XII.



Figure 60: Plate XII,  
*La Vita di Giotto*, 1772,  
etching, (leaves) 18.8 x 14.1 in.



Figure 61: Spinello Aretino,  
*Salome*, 1395,  
fresco fragment, 20.2 x 21.2 in.,  
Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool



Figure 62: Plate XI,  
*La Vita di Giotto*, 1772,  
etching, (leaves) 18.8 x 14.1 in.





Figure 63: Spinello Aretino,  
*Two Haloed Mourners*, c. 1390,  
fresco fragment, 20.1 x 20.1 in.,  
National Gallery, London



Figure 64: Giotto di Bondone,  
*Coronation of the Virgin*, Baroncelli Polyptych, c. 1334,  
tempera on wood, (entire polyptych) 72.8 x 127.1 in.,  
Baroncelli Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence



Figure 65: Spinello Aretino,  
*The Presentation of St John in the Temple*, c. 1390,  
fresco fragment, 15.5 x 12.2 in.,  
Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool



Figure 66: Giotto di Bondone,  
*Lamentation*, c. 1305,  
fresco, 78.7 x 72.8 in.,  
Arena Chapel, Padua





Figure 67: Plate III,  
*La Vita di Giotto*, 1772,  
 etching with aquatint shading, (leaves) 18.8 x 14.1 in.



Figure 68: Spinello Aretino,  
 Detail from *The Presentation of St John in the Temple*, c. 1390,  
 fresco fragment, (entire fragment) 15.5 x 12.2 in.,  
 Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool



Figure 69: George Romney,  
(*Marriage of the Virgin?*) possibly after Cimabue,  
Italian sketchbook, 1775,  
graphite, (sheet) 6.4 x 4.5 in.,  
Yale Centre for British Art, New Haven



Figure 70: George Romney,  
(*The Entombment?*) possibly after Cimabue, c. 1773-1775,  
pen and brown ink over traces of black chalk, 8.1 x 11.8 in.,  
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York





Figure 71: *Sir John Hawkwood*,  
 after Paolo Uccello, 1772,  
 engraving, 12.9 x 8.9 in.



Figure 72: Paolo Uccello,  
*Funerary Monument to Sir John  
 Hawkwood*, 1436,  
 fresco, 322.8 x 202.7 in.,  
 Duomo, Florence



Figure 73: *Memoirs of the Early Italian Painters*,  
Anna Jameson,  
(London, 1845), engraving



Figure 74: Plate V,  
*La Vita di Giotto*, 1772,  
etching with aquatint shading, (leaves) 18.8 x 14.1 in.

Illustrations by Augustus Wall Callcott unless otherwise stated.



Figure 75: John Linnell,  
*Augustus Wall Callcott R.A.*, c. 1832,  
oil on canvas, 13.3 x 11 in.,  
Yale Centre for British Art, New Haven



Figure 76: Edwin Henry Landseer,  
*Sir Augustus Wall Callcott*, 1833,  
oil on millboard, 14 x 9.7 in.,  
National Portrait Gallery, London



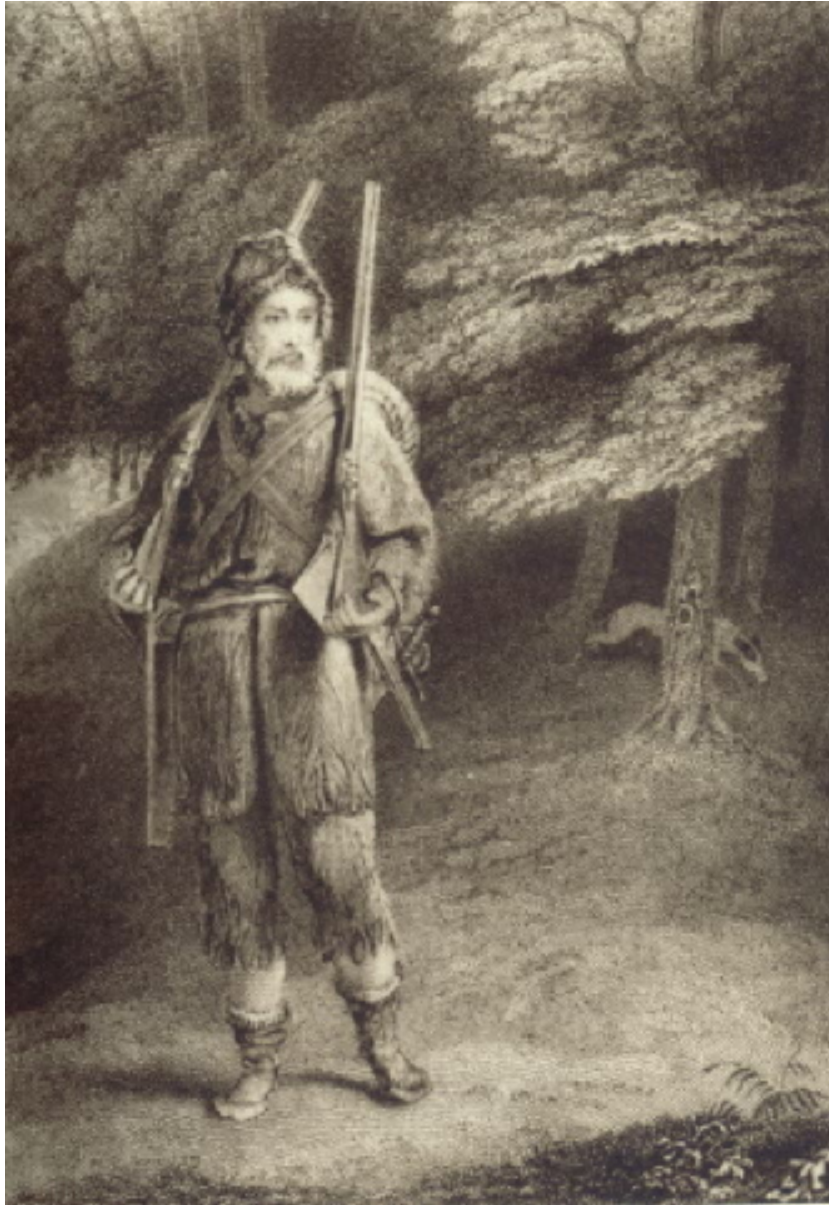


Figure 77: Charles Heath after Thomas Stothard,  
‘Robinson Crusoe in his Island Dress’,  
*The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, Plate VII, 1820,  
etching and engraving, (image) 5.1 x 3.8 in.



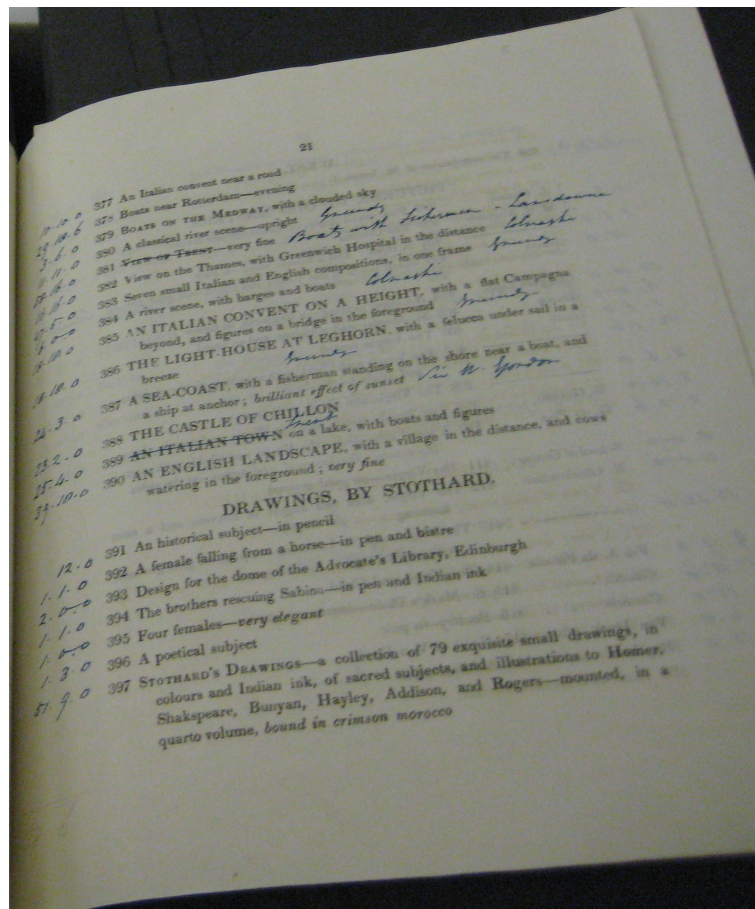


Figure 78: Page 21 of the Christie's sale catalogue of the collection of Sir Augustus Wall Callcott, dated 8th-11th May 1845, Bodleian Library MS. Eng. d. 2270

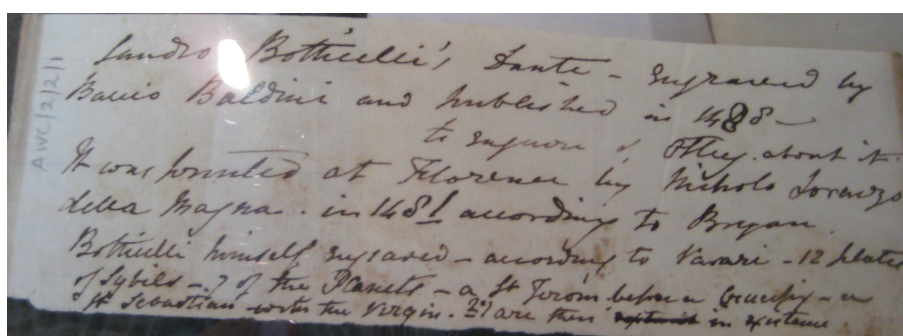


Figure 79: Slip of paper (in Maria's handwriting) originally between the penultimate pages of an Address Book, used to list pictures seen alphabetically by artist; showing a note regarding William Young Ottley, CI/AWC/2/2/1



Figure 80: *Lady Maria Callcott, née Dundas*, c. 1830s,  
oil on canvas, 42.1 x 30.7 in.,  
Government Art Collection, London



Figure 81: Sir Thomas Lawrence,  
*Maria Graham (later Lady Callcott)*, 1819,  
oil on canvas, 23.5 x 19.5 in.,  
National Portrait Gallery, London



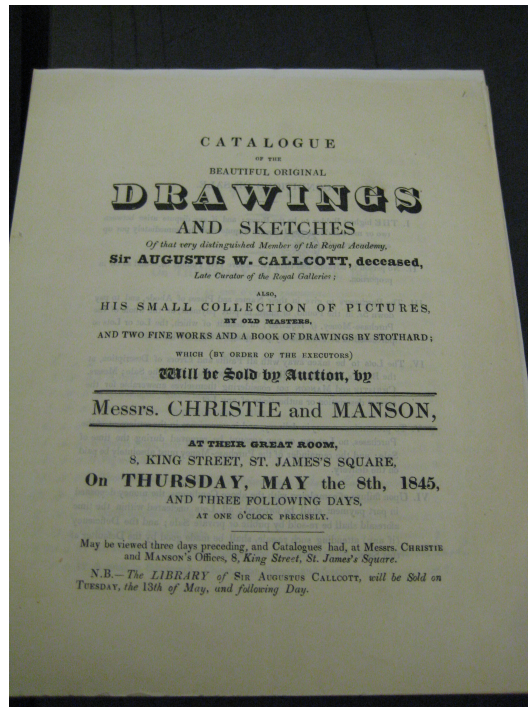


Figure 82: Front cover of the Christie's sale catalogue of the collection of Sir Augustus Wall Callcott, dated 8th-11th May 1845

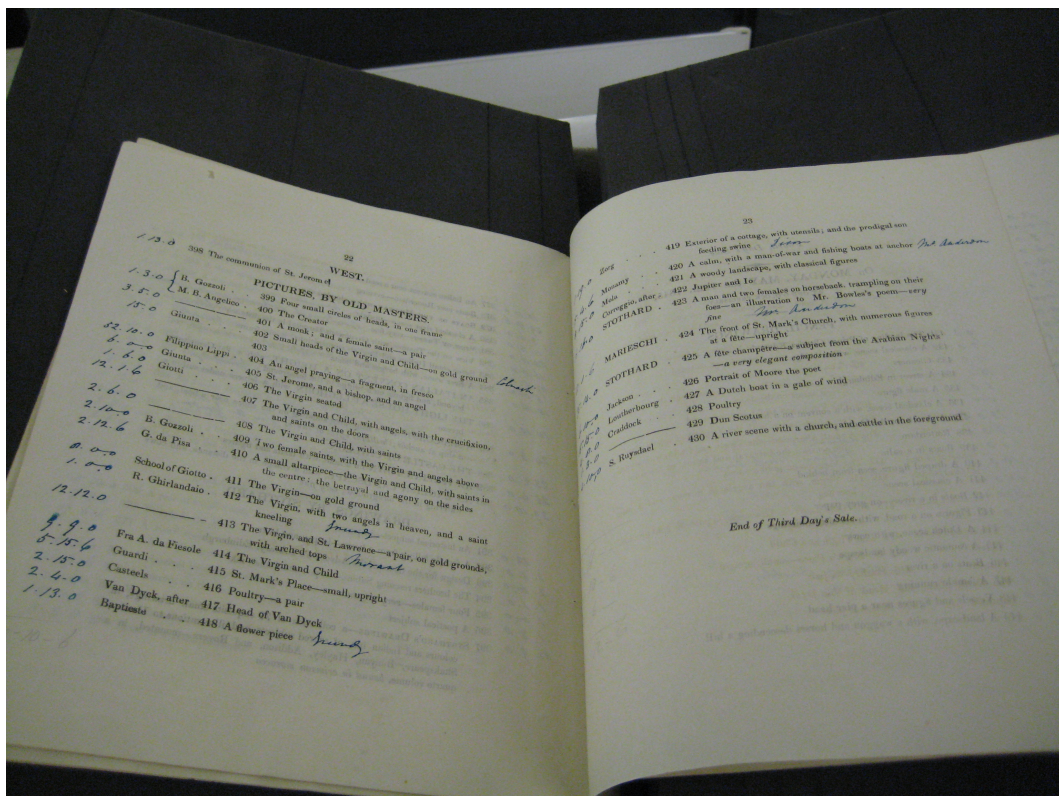


Figure 83: Pages 22-23 of the Christie's sale catalogue of the collection of Sir Augustus Wall Callcott, dated 8th-11th May 1845, showing the primitives sold at that sale

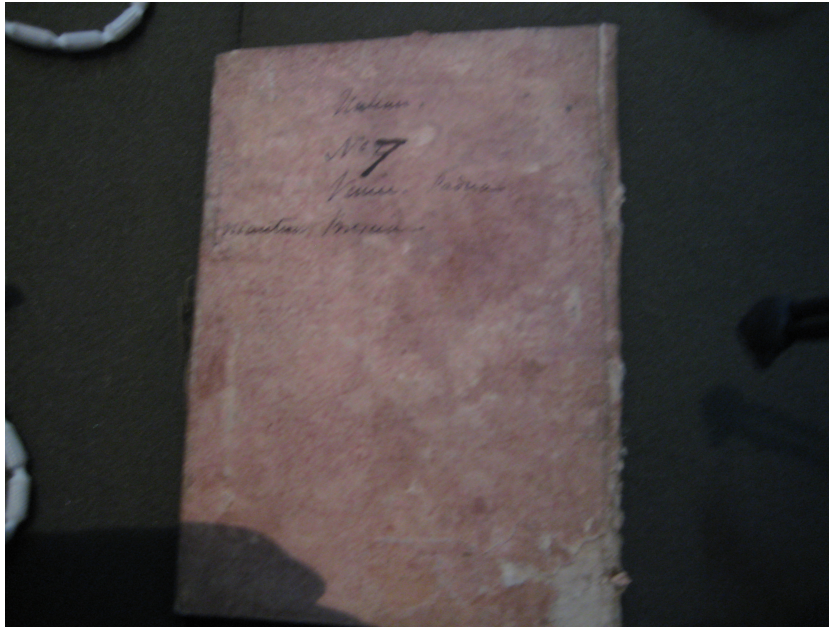


Figure 84: 'Italian. / No 7 / Venice. Padua / Mantua. Brescia',  
Front cover of Augustus Wall Callcott's journal for his stay in Venice, Padua,  
Mantua and Brescia,  
CI/AWC/1/10

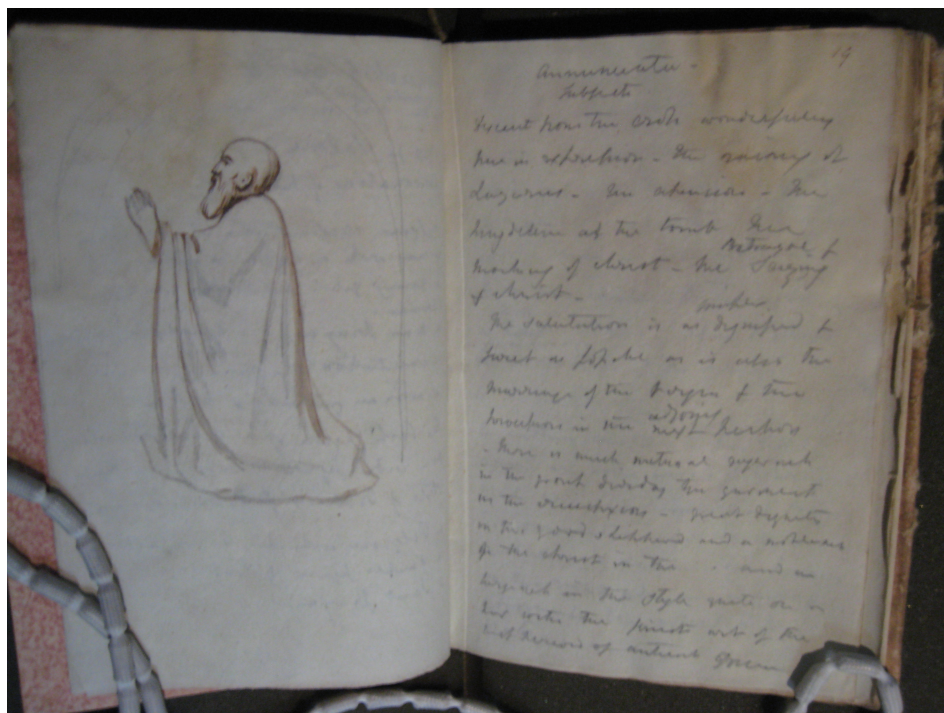


Figure 85: 'Italian. / No 7 / Venice. Padua / Mantua. Brescia',  
Pages relating to Callcott's visit to the Arena Chapel, Padua,  
CI/AWC/1/10



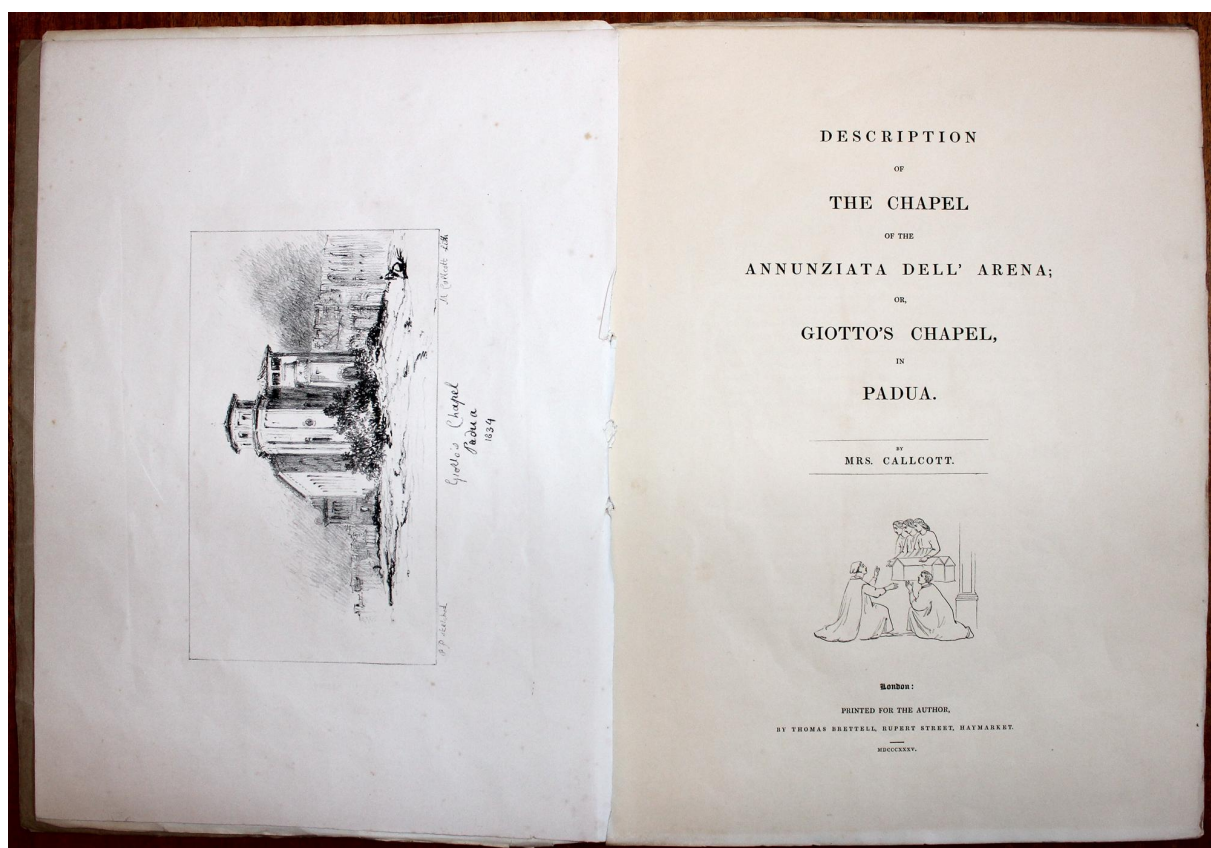


Figure 86: Frontispiece and Title Page

Maria Callcott, *Description of the Chapel of the Annunziata dell'Arena; or, Giotto's Chapel in Padua*, (London, 1835),  
 (frontispiece) lithograph and (titlepage image) woodcut, 4.7 x 8 and 2.3 x 3.1 ins.



Figure 87: Interior view of the Arena Chapel, Padua, photograph

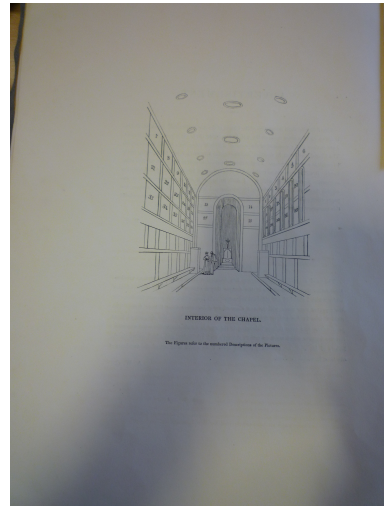


Figure 88: Plan of the Chapel Interior,  
Maria Callcott, *Description*,  
(London, 1835),  
woodcut, 7.6 x 5.1 in.



Figure 89: *Interior of the Arena Chapel, Padua*,  
Vincent Brook, chromolithograph after a watercolour by Mrs Higford-Burr,  
published by the Arundel Society, 1855-1857, 28.7 x 31.7 in.



Figure 90: (Detail from) 'The Last Judgement',  
 Maria Callcott, *Description*, (London, 1835),  
 woodcut, 2.3 x 3.1 in.

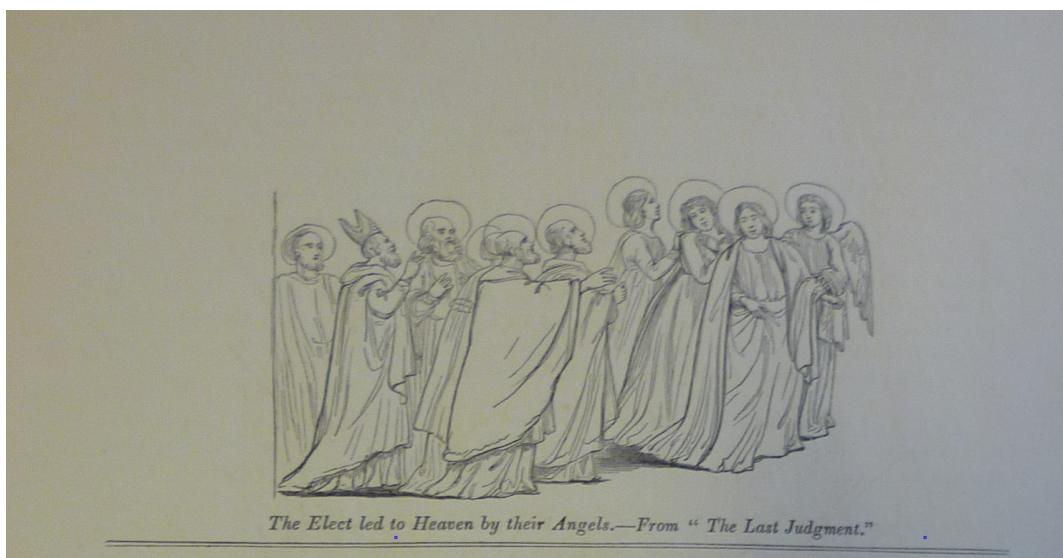


Figure 91: (Detail from) 'The Last Judgement',  
 Maria Callcott, *Description*, (London, 1835) p. 1,  
 woodcut, 2.7 x 4.3 in.





Figure 92: (Detail from) 'The Meeting of Anna and Joachim at the Golden Gate',  
 Maria Callcott, *Description*, (London, 1835) p. 3,  
 wood engraving, 4.9 x 5.2 in.

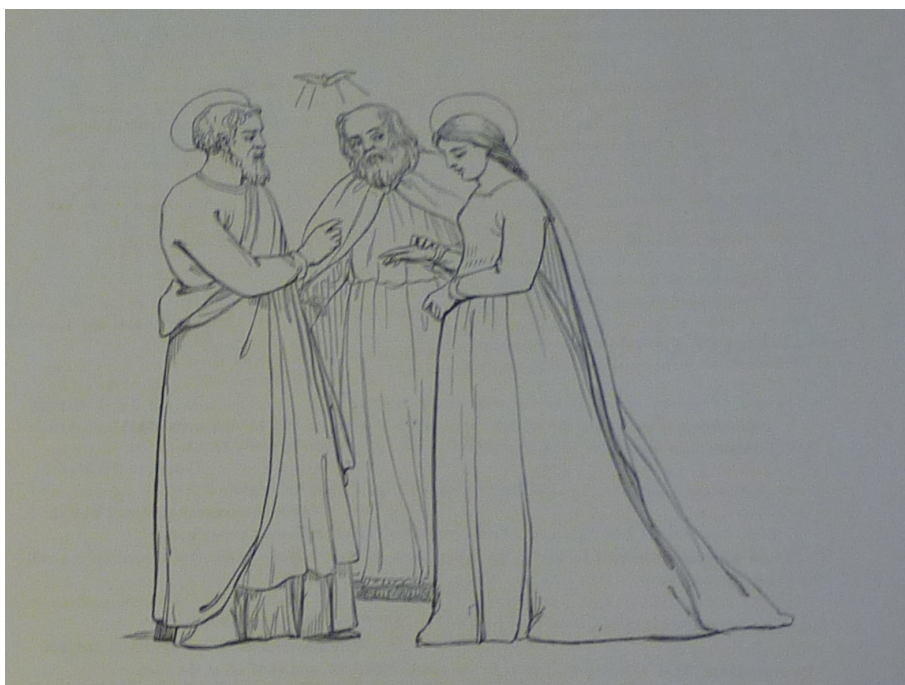


Figure 93: (Detail from) the 'Marriage of the Virgin',  
 Maria Callcott, *Description*, (London, 1835) p. 5,  
 wood engraving, 5.3 x 5.1 in.



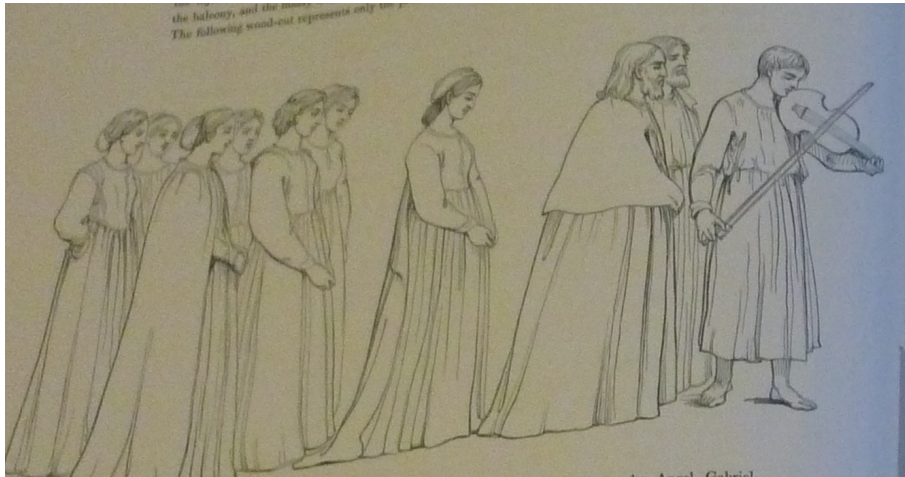


Figure 94: (Detail from) the 'Marriage Procession',  
 Maria Callcott, *Description*, (London, 1835) p. 6,  
 wood engraving, 3.9 x 8.2 in.

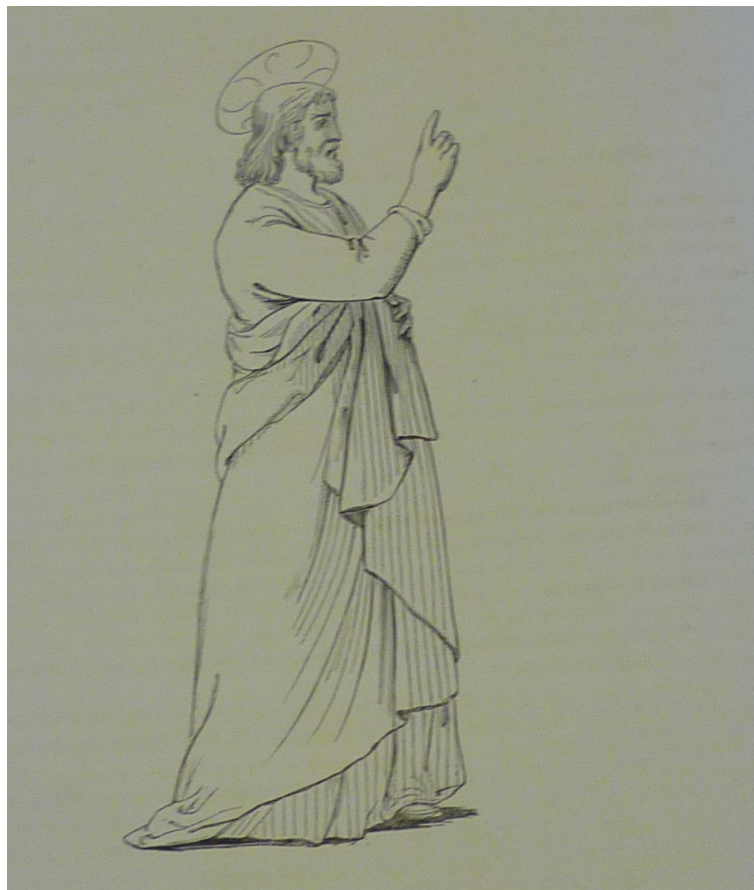


Figure 95: (Detail from) 'Christ Raising Lazarus',  
 Maria Callcott, *Description*, (London, 1835) p. 8,  
 wood engraving, 5.7 x 2.3 in.



Figure 96: (Detail from) 'The Lamentation',  
Maria Callcott, *Description*, (London, 1835) p. 10,  
wood engraving, 2.3 x 2.9 in.



Figure 97: (Detail from) 'The Resurrection',  
Maria Callcott, *Description*, (London, 1835) p. 11,  
wood engraving, 3.8 x 4.3 in.



Figure 98: (Detail from) 'The Ascension',  
Maria Callcott, *Description*, (London, 1835) p. 12,  
wood engraving, 4.7 x 2.7 in.



Figure 99: 'Hope',  
Maria Callcott, *Description*, (London, 1835) p. 13,  
wood engraving, 5.5 x 3.3 in.





Figure 100: (Detail from) 'The Meeting of Anna and Joachim at the Golden Gate',  
Maria Callcott, *Description*, (London, 1835) p. 3,  
wood engraving, (entire illustration) 4.9 x 5.2 in.



Figure 101: Giotto di Bondone,  
*The Meeting at the Golden Gate*, c. 1305,  
fresco, 78.7 x 72.8 in.,  
Arena Chapel, Padua

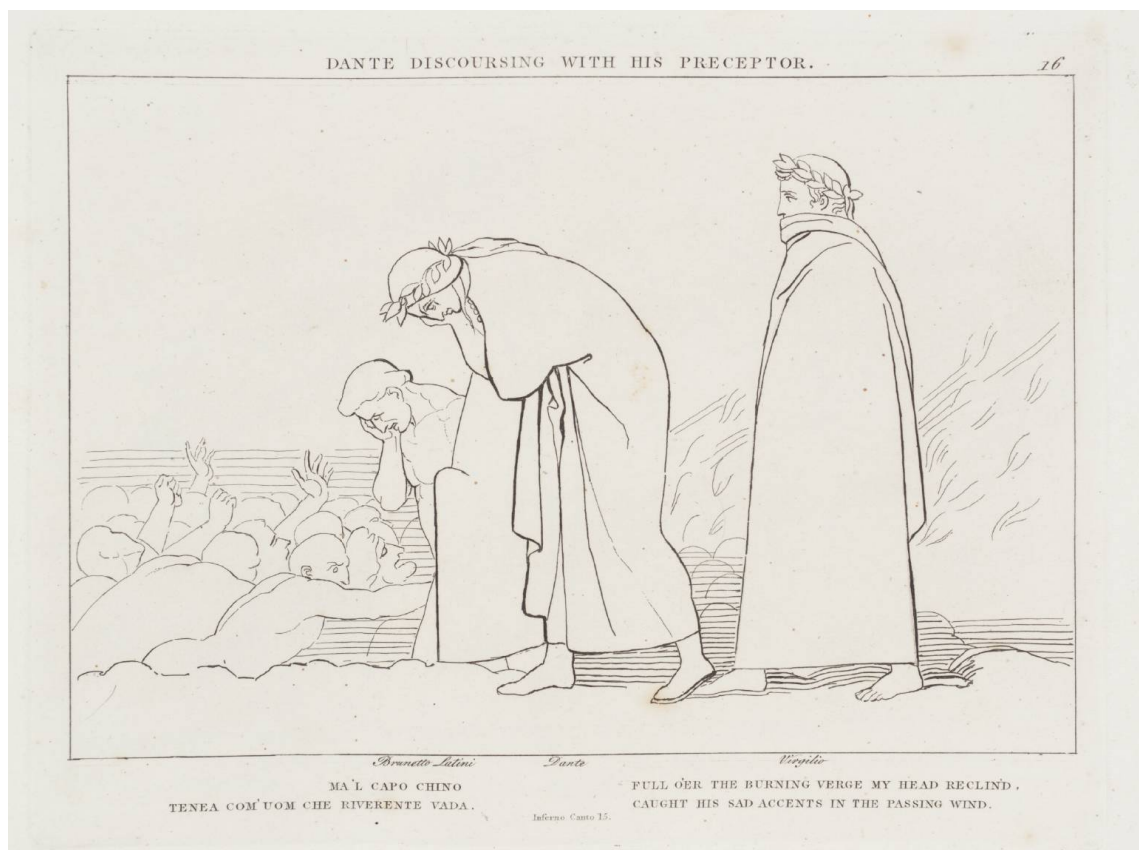


Figure 102: After John Flaxman, *Dante Discoursing with his Preceptor*, 1807, etching, 5.1 x 7.5 in.

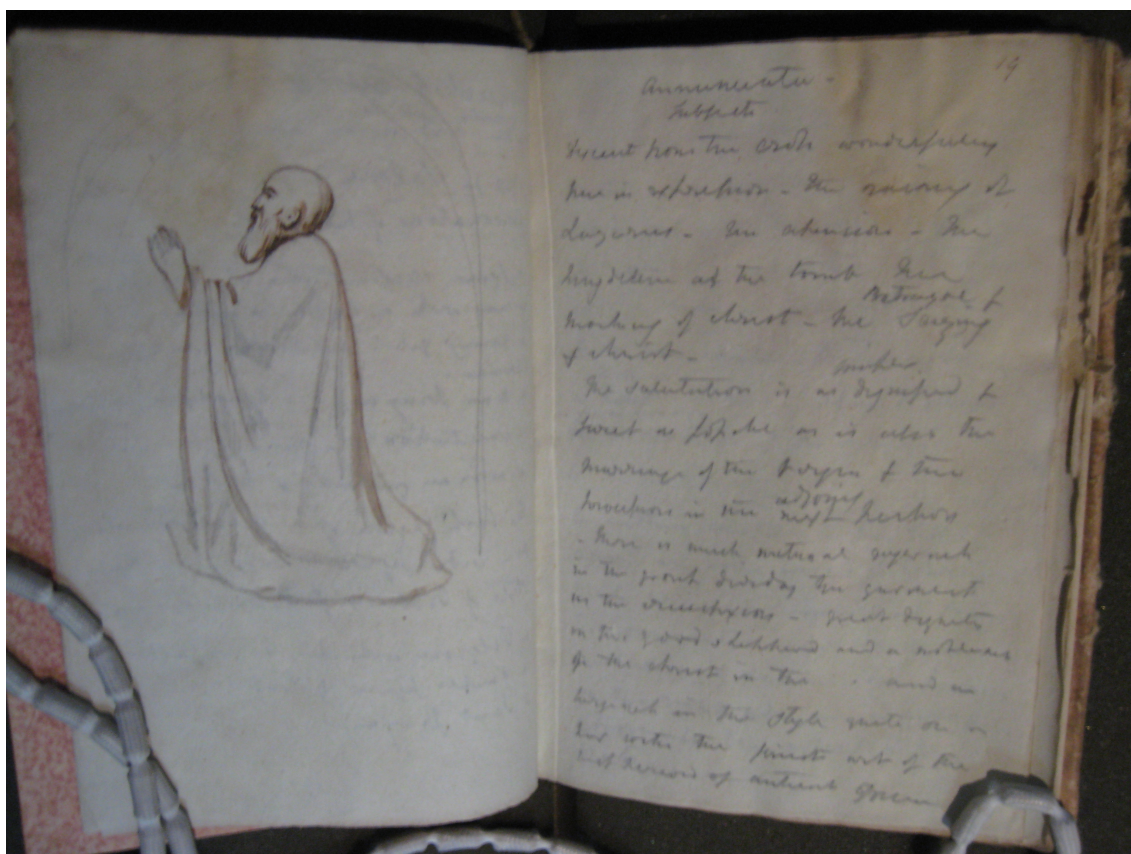


Figure 103: 'Italian. / No 7 / Venice. Padua / Mantua. Brescia',  
Pages relating to Callcott's visit to the Arena Chapel, Padua,  
CI/AWC/1/10



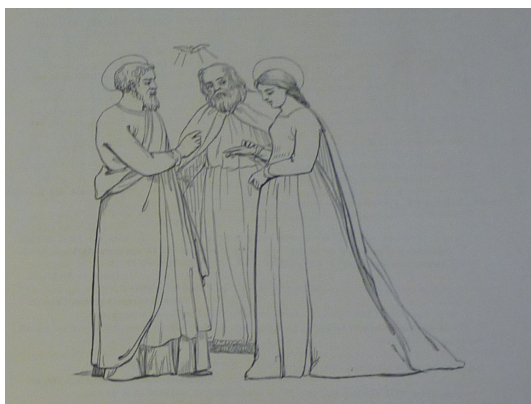


Figure 104: (Detail from) 'The Marriage of the Virgin', Maria Callcott, *Description*, (London, 1835) p. 5, wood engraving, 5.3 x 5.1 in.



Figure 105: Giotto di Bondone, *The Marriage of the Virgin*, c. 1305, fresco, 78.7 x 72.8 in., Arena Chapel, Padua

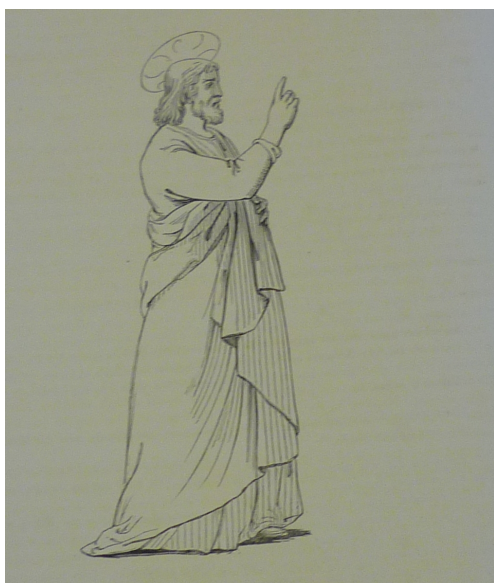


Figure 106: (Detail from) 'Christ Raising Lazarus', Maria Callcott, *Description*, (London, 1835) p. 8, wood engraving, (entire illustration) 5.7 x 2.3 in.



Figure 107: Giotto di Bondone, *The Raising of Lazarus*, c. 1305, fresco, 78.7 x 72.8 in., Arena Chapel, Padua



Figure 108: (Detail from) 'The Lamentation',  
Maria Callcott, *Description*,  
(London, 1835) p. 10,  
wood engraving, 2.3 x 2.9 in.



Figure 109: Giotto di Bondone,  
*The Lamentation*, c. 1305,  
fresco, 78.7 x 72.8 in.,  
Arena Chapel, Padua



Figure 110: John Skippe, 'Copy after part of Giotto's *Lamentation* fresco  
(Arena Chapel, Padua), 1773,  
pen and ink with brown wash, heightened with white on blue paper,  
(album covers) 18.3 x 14.8 in.,  
British Museum, London





Figure 111: (Detail from) 'The Resurrection',  
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wood engraving, 3.8 x 4.3 in.



Figure 112: Giotto di Bondone,  
*The Resurrection*, c. 1305,  
fresco, 78.7 x 72.8 in.,  
Arena Chapel, Padua



Figure 113: (Detail from) 'The Ascension',  
Maria Callcott, *Description*,  
(London, 1835) p. 3,  
wood engraving, 4.7 x 2.7 in.



Figure 114: Giotto di Bondone,  
*The Ascension*, c. 1305,  
fresco, 78.7 x 72.8 in.,  
Arena Chapel, Padua

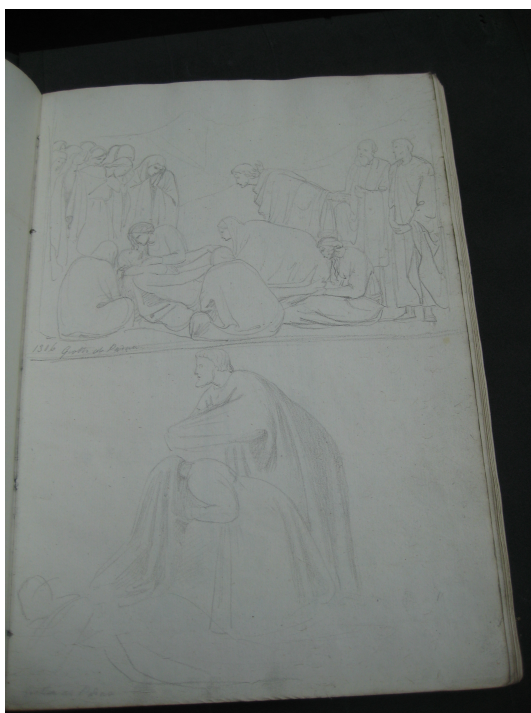


Figure 115: William Hilton,  
Copy after Giotto's *Lamentation*, 1825,  
graphite,  
British Museum, London

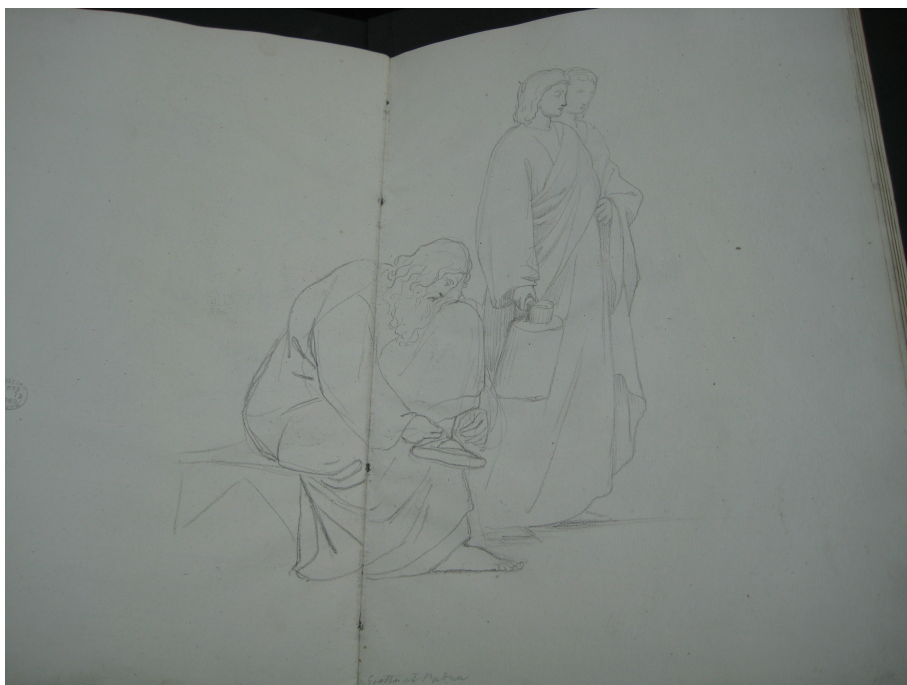


Figure 116: William Hilton,  
Copy after Giotto's *Christ Raising Lazarus*, 1825,  
graphite,  
British Museum, London



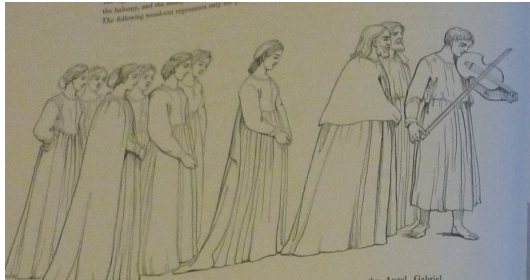


Figure 117: (Detail from) the  
'Marriage Procession',  
Maria Callcott, *Description*,  
(London, 1835) p. 6,  
wood engraving, (entire illustration)  
3.9 x 8.2 in.



Figure 118: Illustration to 'Giotto',  
Mrs Jameson, *Memoirs of the Early  
Italian Painters*,  
(London, 1845), engraving



Figure 119: Giotto di Bondone,  
*Marriage Procession*, c. 1305,  
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Arena Chapel, Padua

All works by William Blake unless specified.



Figure 120: Thomas Phillips,  
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National Portrait Gallery, London



Figure 121: Title Page,  
*Illustrations of the Book of Job*, 1826,  
engraving, (leaves) 11 x 9 in.



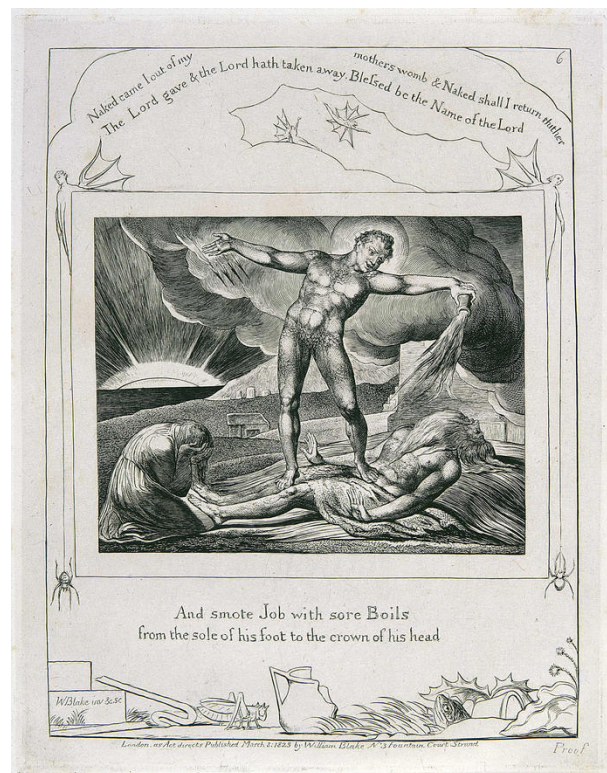


Figure 122: 'Satan smiting Job with Boils',  
*Illustrations of the Book of Job*, 1826,  
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Figure 123: Attributed to Orcagna,  
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Campo Santo, Pisa



Figure 124: 'Job's Sons and Daughters Overwhelmed by Satan',  
*Illustrations of the Book of Job*, 1826,  
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Figure 125: Carlo Lasinio, after Orcagna,  
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*I più celebri quadri delle diverse scuole italiane  
 riuniti dell'appartamento Borgia del Vaticano,*  
 c. 1820, engraving, 5.6 x 9.8 in.

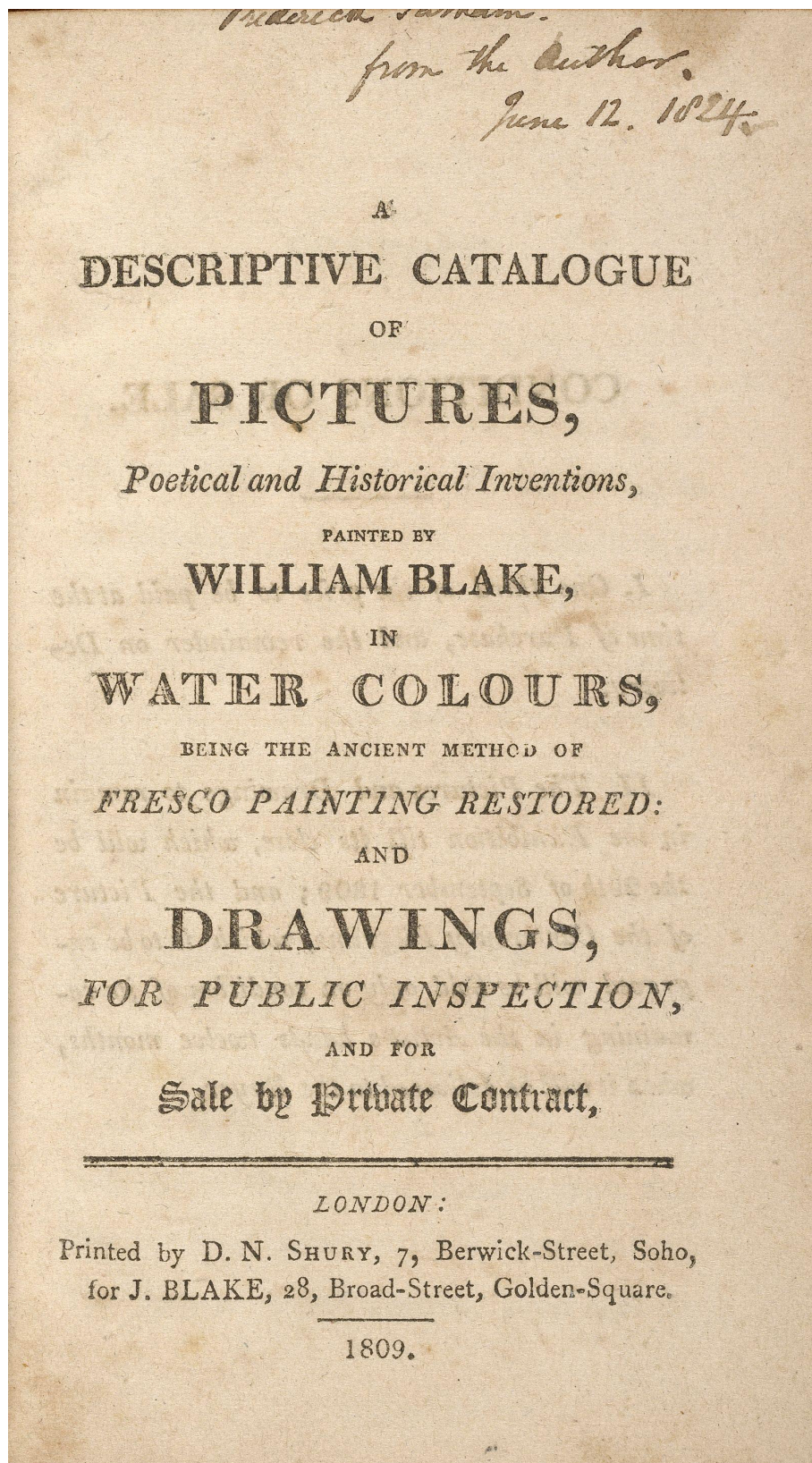


Figure 128: Title Page,  
*A Descriptive Catalogue*, 1809



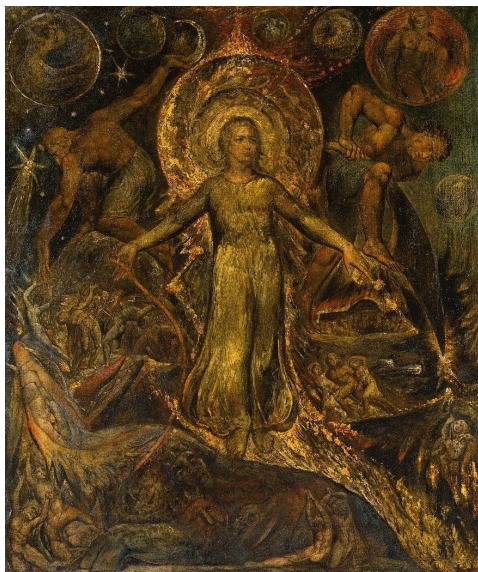


Figure 129: *The Spiritual Form of Pitt Guiding Behemoth*, ? 1805, tempera heightened with gold on canvas, 29.1 x 24.6 in., Tate Gallery, London



Figure 130: *The Spiritual Form of Nelson Guiding Leviathan*, c. 1805-1809, tempera on canvas, 30 x 24.6 in., Tate Gallery, London



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Figure 132: Isaac Fuller,  
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Figure 134: James Barry,  
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Figure 135: John Flaxman, after Andrea Pisano,  
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 graphite,  
 Yale Sketchbook, Yale Centre for British Art, New Haven



Figure 136: *The Creation of Eve*, c. 1803-1805,  
 watercolour, pen and ink, 16.4 x 13.1 in.,  
 Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

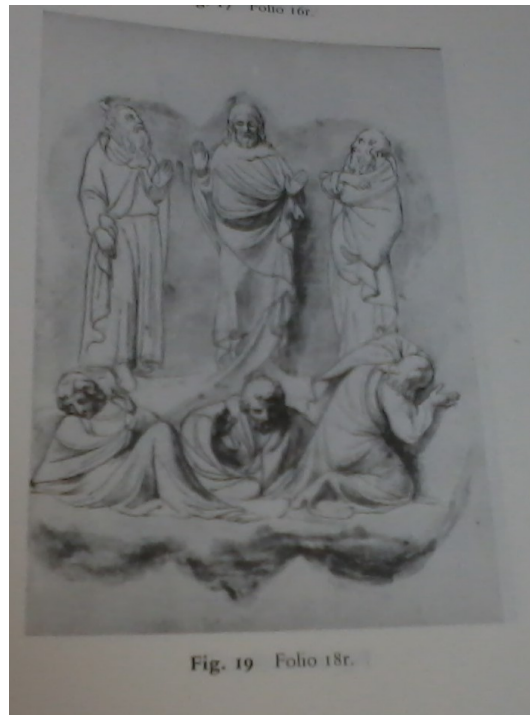


Figure 137: John Flaxman, after Ghiberti,  
*The Transfiguration*, c. 1787-1794,  
 graphite,  
 Yale Sketchbook, Yale Centre for British Art, New Haven

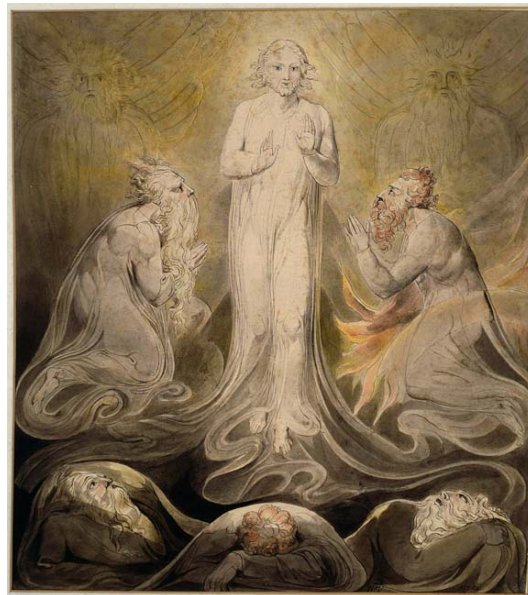


Figure 138: *The Transfiguration*, c. 1800,  
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Figure 139: John Flaxman,  
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Figure 142: John Francis Rigaud,  
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Guildhall Art Gallery, London

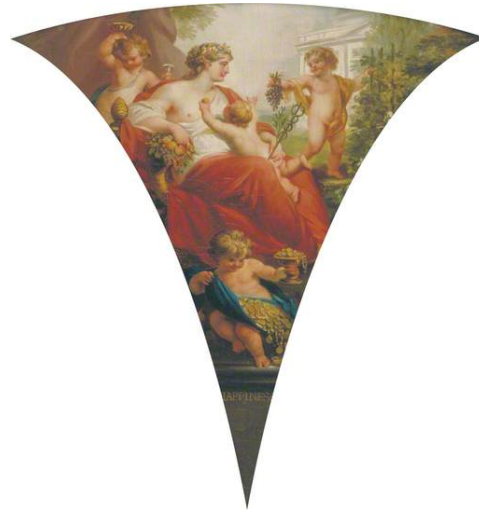


Figure 143: John Francis Rigaud,  
*Happiness* (study for fresco), 1794,  
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Guildhall Art Gallery, London

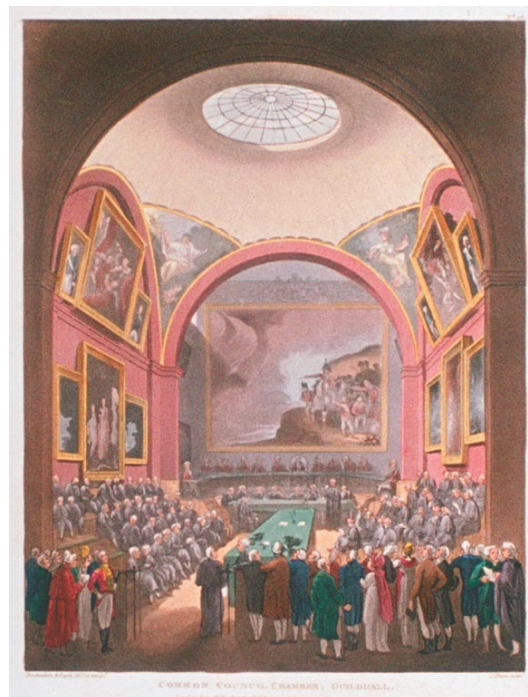


Figure 144: Thomas Rowlandson (del.), Augustus Pugin (sculp.) and J. Bluck  
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*Common Council Chamber, Guildhall*,  
Plate 42, R. Ackermann, *The Microcosm of London* (London, 1808),  
aquatint, 10.8 x 9.2 in.

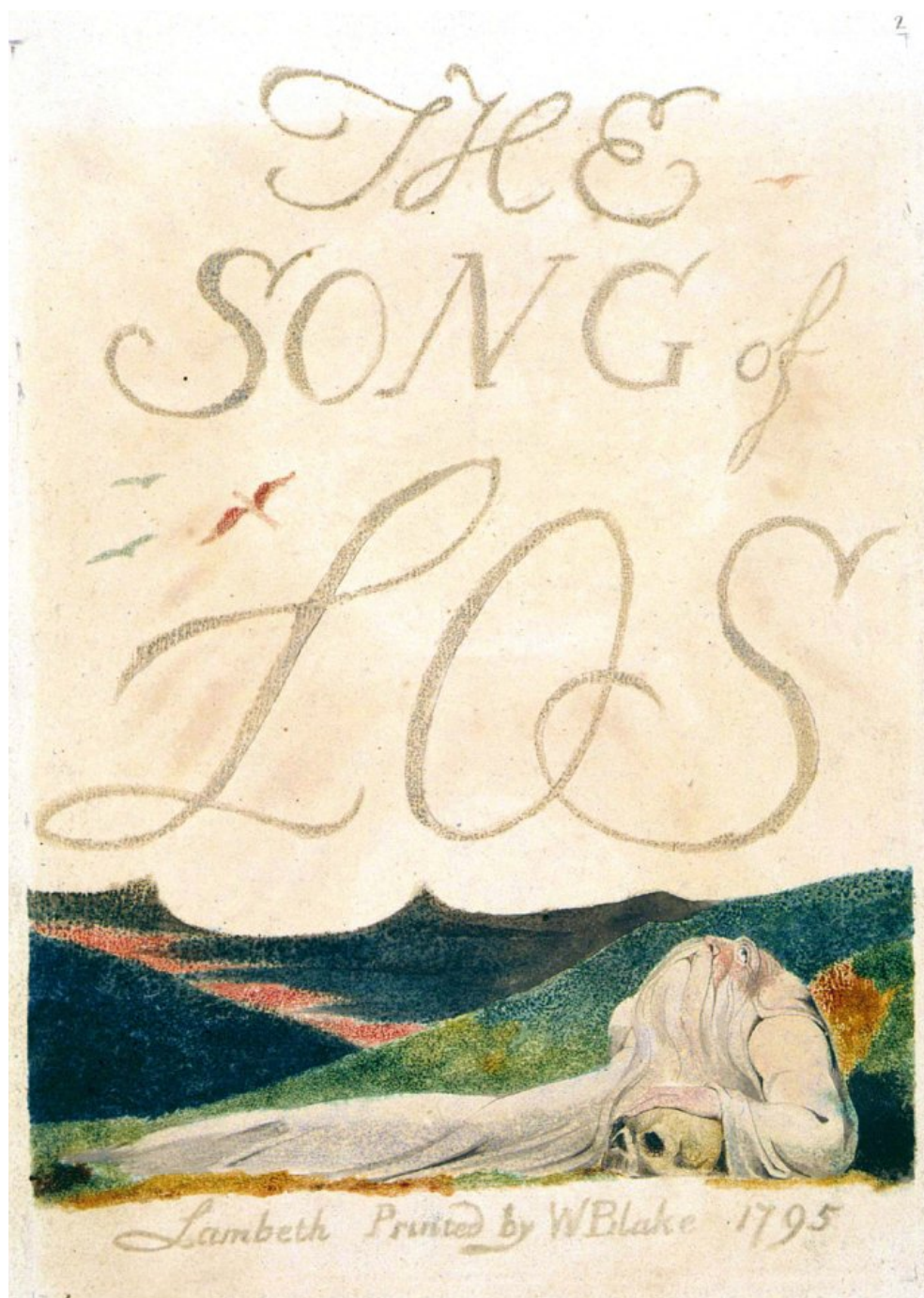


Figure 145: Title Page,  
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Figure 146: *Christ appearing before the Apostles*, 1795,  
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Figure 148: *The Angel Gabriel  
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Figure 149: *The Baptism of Christ*,  
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Figure 150: *The Agony in the Garden*,  
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All works by William Dyce unless specified.



Figure 151: John Watkins,  
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Figure 155: C.P. Landon after Albani,  
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Figure 156: *Bacchus Nursed by the Nymphs of Nyssa*, 1827,  
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Figure 159: *Puck*, 1825,  
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Figure 160: Joshua Reynolds, *Puck*,  
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Figure 161: *The Daughters of Jethro Defended by Moses*, 1829,  
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Figure 162: *The Deposition*, c. 1820-1842,  
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Figure 163: Sandro Botticelli,  
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Figure 164: Rosso Fiorentino,  
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Figure 165: Sandro Botticelli,  
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Figure 166: Rosso Fiorentino,  
*Moses Defending the Daughters of  
Jethro*, 1524-1547,  
oil on canvas, 62.9 x 46 in.,  
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Figure 167: *The Daughters of Jethro Defended by Moses*, 1829,  
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Figure 168: Ingres,  
*Christ Giving the Keys of Heaven to  
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Figure 169: Johann Friedrich  
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Figure 170: Otto Spekter after Johann Friedrich Overbeck,  
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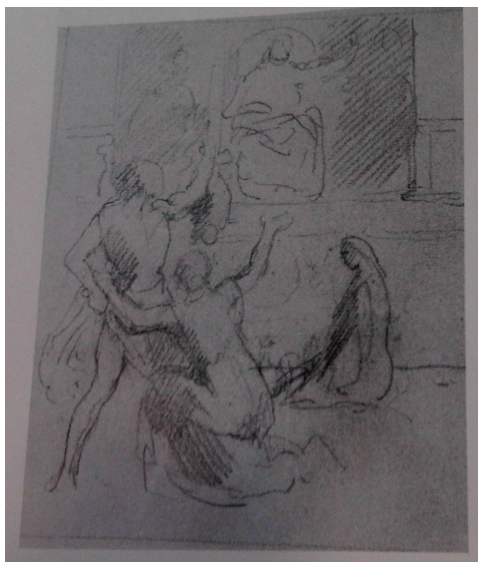


Figure 171: *The Judgement of Solomon*, 1836,  
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V&A Museum, London



Figure 172: Ingres,  
*Christ Giving the Keys of Heaven to  
St Peter*, 1818-1820,  
oil on canvas, 112 x 85.4 in.  
Musée Ingres, Montauban



Figure 173: *The Judgement of Solomon*, 1836,  
tempera on paper on canvas, 59.5 x 96.4 in.,  
National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh

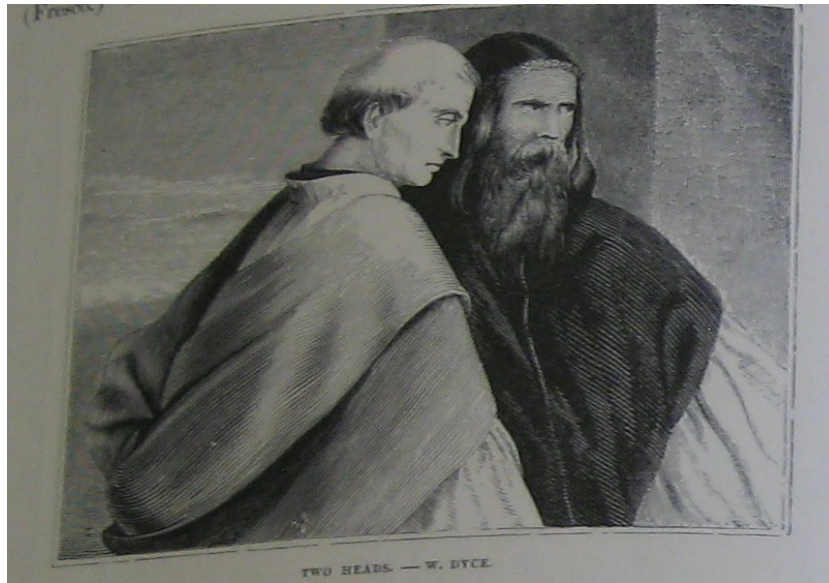


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Figure 177: Masaccio  
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Figure 178: Detail of *The Baptism of Ethelbert*, 1845, watercolour, (entire work) 23.7 x 18.7 in., Parliamentary Art Collection, London



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Figure 181: Preparatory drawing for *The Baptism of Ethelbert*, 1845, watercolour, 23.7 x 18.7 in., Parliamentary Art Collection, London



Figure 182: Study for *The Baptism of Ethelbert*, c. 1845, chalk, 7.2 x 5.6 in., V&A Museum, London



Figure 183: *The Baptism of Ethelbert*, 1846,  
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Figure 184: Vittore Carpaccio,  
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Figure 185: Paolo Veronese,  
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Figure 186: *The Baptism of Ethelbert*, 1846,  
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Figure 187: Daniel Maclise,  
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# THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS

No. 259.—Vol. X.]

FOR THE WEEK ENDING SATURDAY, APRIL 17, 1847.

[SIXPENCE.]

## THE OLD AND THE NEW.



HEARING up a chain of historical associations is a process always reluctantly performed; men cling to the things of the past with singular fondness, no matter how inconvenient they become in the midst of changed times and circumstances. Time and the elements that hate all the works of men's hands, and

are the great pioneers that clear the path in the van of improvement. The Fire, the destroyer of all things, we owe the New Houses of Legislature, in which the future destinies of this Empire, for good and ill, will be decided through ages to come. The feeling that "invested the former fabric with so great an interest, will cause many to regret its loss; some, indeed, even in gazing on the purple and gold which now surrounds the pillars of the State, will not be contented, but mourn over the Old Palace that sheltered the Saxon Monarchy, with Edward the Confessor, died beneath its roof, and then opened its doors to the Normans. These are things that, once lost, cannot be recovered; and the spell of antiquity is one of those that "breaks never to unite again." The feeling is more general than might be imagined; the mass of mankind feel a positive reluctance to having their shields scored; but time and accident compel renovation. To necessity, not reason, we owe the New Houses of Parliament.

It will be long before men are reconciled to them, still longer before they become invested with "associations." The new creation may be better perhaps, in many respects, than the old one; but its interest is of a different kind. We cannot people the modern Hall with the shades of the dwellers who once gave it life; we must accept its convenience and its splendour without the influence that once gave it dignity and narrow ways a spell over the mind, as if a portion of the greatness of the past lingered there—as if the link between us and the antiquity we loved with so many sorrows and virtues was not wholly severed. But the hour comes, either for decay, or the elements to do their work, and fabrics that have stood piled together, or have grown in inconspicuous accumulation out of each other according to the caprice and necessity of contrivance, disappear in a single night, and the visible records of the history of a nation fade from the eye of men as utterly as the "smoke of the burning." But as the true interest they bore was drawn not from the fashion of the brick and stone that formed them, but from the spirit, energy, and courage of the men who worked there in their day and generation, so we turn forthwith from the past, and with efforts as stout as our ancestors used in like emergencies, create what will be interesting to those who will be to us what we are to the future who drew up the Great Charter, and unconsciously secured the liberty of a people by first carefully getting and keeping every privilege to themselves. We shall become antiquity, and our sayings and doings will hereafter be quoted by the prayers of the past, who will shake their heads over innovations some five or six centuries hence, as the "wisdom of our ancestors," the idea gives us a new sense of our importance; we are men of the middle ages, we are building for posterity; those who raised Westminster Abbey and the Hall

of Rufus did no more; William of Wykeham was but an earlier Barry; we can see ourselves in illuminated books, drawn after the manner of Mr. Pugin's portrait, by Herbert; we shall be studied and Chesterfield, will take the place of the booklets and how, and coats of mail; things may become curious that never possessed possible make of an Apocryphus, and be driven to despair to reconstruct an Antigone or an Iphigeneia; Greek will afford them no help, for as civilization progresses it will become not only a dead language, but a buried one. Seriously, it is as well sometimes to consider the other side of the

question, and to ask what time is bringing us, and what we are ourselves leaving to the future. Regrets for what has vanished are proverbially useless; every age voluntarily separates itself in life and thought from its predecessors, and could not cling to old habits and modes of feeling, even if it would. And the sorrow with which we regard the passing away of old objects—marked on the Elms, Elizabethan mansions, Houses of Parliament, and the like—is wholly an unselfish one. It implies us to be made feel so forcibly the truth of the poet's question—

What is there that will last?  
All things are taken from us and become  
Furniture and porcelains of the dwellers past.

But as change and renovation are the destiny of the world, it is better not to give the past more power over the present than it deserves, or is entitled to. Wherefore we have succeeded in persuading ourselves, and would endeavour to persuade the reader, that much of what is called the greatness of men and things in the past, is our own mistake, more than their merit. We see them through the mists of time, and glance curiously enough by historians to give their own tinge to events and persons; and men are always ready to give credit to any account, to any age but their own, to any individuals except their contemporaries.

We have no "great man" sighs a Durand, looking towards the East like a Sun-worshipper. What if we do not require great men, and that the mass progresses with a general sense of its own wants and evils, and the remedies for them, that enable them to do the work of their era without the exceptional minds that could impose themselves on the past? Things are sometimes great by comparison with the smallness of what surrounds them; our leading minds are not, perhaps, so much above the standard of the many as some that could be named from former times. But closer examination than is generally given to the actions of the great of the past, will raise strong doubts whether they were so directly commanded by intellectual power as a man who would be great must do at present.

A Wolsey had no hostile majorities to call in to account, and feel the moment his master's aversion was excited, and then he was squeezed dry and thrown away like a sponge. There was no self-supporting greatness there. Richelieu ruled by craft and cruelty, the lowest of all human means of influence; the palladium of the Revolution was little more than a repetition of the tactics of his policy which was to kill all he suspected, or who stood in his way; yet Richelieu is reckoned a great man by those who cannot find words to express their horror of the Reign of Terror. One by one the names of history could be stripped of their greatness if they were coldly and exactly judged.

It is possible to believe, then, after all, that the roof of the new Houses of Parliament will close over men as able as any that have sat under the shadow of the old one. We do not know that even the Peers may not compete with their fathers, though in former times they made more noise than now the Commons, rising like a tide, have overflooded, and driven them from the exclusive possession of a great deal they once held as their own. There are four or five great lawyers among them, three of whom have filled the office of Chancellor. Open Lord Campbell's "Lives of the Chancellors," and compare either of those with the awfully great men the ancient Lord Chancellors are supposed to have been. Why the talent and hearing and will required to fill the office now would have set up ten Chancellors of the middle ages; in honesty and rectitude the superiority is decidedly with the moderns. We can balance a Marlborough with a Wellington, who has



THE NEW HOUSES FOR LORDS.—MR. BENTON'S PICTURE OF "THE HAPPENING OF ST. STEPHEN," OVER THE THROSE.

[SEE PAGE 215.]

Figure 189: Front page,  
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